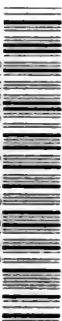


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CORINNA,

OR

ITALY.

BY

MAD. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN.

..... Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin parte, e 'l mar circonda; e l' Alpe.
PETRARCH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SAMUEL TIPPÉR,
Leadenhall-street.

1807.

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CORINNA.

BOOK XV.

CHAP I.

DEPARTURE FROM ROME, AND JOURNEY TO VENICE.

OSWALD read Corinna's letter with deep emotion. He was agitated by a confused mixture of various sensations : sometimes he was pained by the picture which she drew of an English county, and was tortured with the thought that such a woman could never be happy in domestic life ; at others he pitied her sufferings, and could not forbear loving and admiring the simplicity with which she related them.

He likewise felt a jealousy of the sensations she had experienced before she knew him, and the more he endeavoured to disguise this emotion from himself, the more he was tormented by it. He was particularly afflicted at the part which his father occupied in this history, and such was the anguish of his mind that he neither knew what he thought, nor what he did. He abruptly left the house, it was about noon, an hour in which nobody is to be seen in the streets of Naples, the heat of the meridian sun driving every living creature into the shade. He proceeded towards Portici, whither accident, not design, directed his steps, and the scorching sunbeams at the same time excited and disturbed his ideas.

Meanwhile Corinna, after waiting several hours, could no longer resist her ardent desire to see Oswald. She entered his apartment, and not finding him there, his absence at that moment filled her with

excessive alarm. She saw her letter lying upon his table, and not doubting that he had read it before his departure, she imagined that he was gone to return no more, and that she should never behold him again. Her anxiety became almost insupportable ; she resolved to wait, and every moment increased her impatience. She walked with hasty step up and down the apartment, and suddenly stopped to listen to the least noise that might announce his return. At length, unable any longer to endure this state of suspense, she went down stairs to enquire if any one had seen Lord Nelvil, and which way he had gone. The landlord replied that Lord Nelvil had gone towards Portici, but that he certainly would not walk far, as the sun's heat at that moment was liable to produce very dangerous effects. This apprehension served to increase the alarm of Corinna, who, though she had nothing on her head to protect her from the scorching heat of the sun, walked out at ran-

dom into the street. The broad flag-stones of Naples, made of lava, and placed as if for the purpose of increasing the effect of the heat and light, burnt her feet and dazzled her by the reflection of the sun's rays.

She had no intention of going to Portici, but she kept proceeding, and gradually quickening her pace: the anguish and distress of her mind hurried her along. Not a creature was to be seen on the way: at this hour the very animals, afraid of Nature, keep themselves concealed.

Clouds of dust filled the air at the least breath of wind, or when the lightest vehicle passed along the road. The colour of the fields, covered with this dust, conveyed no ideas of vegetation or of life. Corinna every moment felt ready to fall; she did not meet with a single tree against which she might have supported herself, and her senses began to be affected in this

burning desert. She had but a few steps to go, before she would have reached the King's palace, beneath the porticoes of which she would have found a grateful shade and water to refresh herself. But her strength failed; in vain she endeavoured to proceed, for she could no longer see the way. She was seized with a giddiness which represented a thousand lights, more vivid than those of day, dancing around her; these were all at once succeeded by a cloud which enveloped her in an obscurity unaccompanied with coolness: a burning thirst consumed her. She met a Lazzaroni, the only human creature capable of defying at that moment the power of the climate, and she requested him to procure her a little water. The man seeing a female so remarkable for her beauty and the elegance of her dress, alone, in such a place, and at such an hour, had no doubt that she was mad, and ran away in affright.

Fortunately at this instant Oswald was

returning homeward, and his ear caught at a distance some of Corinna's accents. He ran towards her, and received her senseless in his arms ; he carried her in this state under the portico of the palace of Portici, and by his attentions and tenderness he brought her to herself.

As soon as she knew him, she said to him, still under the influence of her delirium : " You promised not to leave me without my consent. I may perhaps now appear unworthy of your affection, but why break your promise ? " " Corinna," answered Oswald, " the idea of leaving you never entered my mind ; I only wanted to reflect on our condition, and to collect myself before I saw you again."—" Well !" rejoined Corinna, striving to appear composed, " you have had plenty of time during these dreadful hours which had nearly cost me my life : tell me then what you have resolved to do." Oswald, alarmed at the tone of Corinna's voice,

which betrayed the emotion of her heart, fell on his knees before her and said: "Corinna, the heart of your friend is not changed; what have I learnt that could extinguish my love for you? But listen—" and as she trembled more than ever, he earnestly continued—"Listen without terror to one who cannot live if he knows that you are unhappy."—"Ah!" exclaimed Corinna, "it is of my happiness you are speaking; your own is already out of the question. I reject not your pity; at the present moment I have occasion for it; but do you think that it is for this alone I am desirous of living?"—"No; it is for love that we will both live," said Oswald; "I will return—" "You will return?" interrupted Corinna, "Ah! then you do intend to leave me! What has happened? What has produced this change since yesterday? Wretched creature that I am!"—"My dear friend," replied Oswald, "cease to distress yourself, and suffer me, if I can, to explain what is

the matter. It is less, much less than you imagine. But," said he, striving to support his emotion in order that he might explain himself, "it is necessary that I should know my father's reasons for opposing our union seven years ago. He never mentioned the subject to me, but his most intimate friend, who is still living in England, must be acquainted with his motives. If, as I imagine, they depend on circumstances of little importance, I shall pay no attention to them; I shall forgive you for having quitted the country, the noble country of our fathers; I shall hope that love will again attach you to it, and that you will prefer domestic felicity, and the virtues of the heart, to the splendor of your genius. I shall hope every thing, and shall do every thing; but if my father has pronounced against you, Corinna, I will never be the husband of another, but neither can I ever be yours."

A cold perspiration bedewed Oswald's

forehead. The effort he had made to disclose his sentiments was such, that Corinna, thinking only of the state in which she beheld him, was some time before she could reply; then seizing his hand, she said: "What! and are you going? Going to England without me?" Oswald was silent. "Cruel man!" exclaimed Corinna, "you give me no answer, you do not contradict what I say. Ah! then it must be true! Alas! though I say so, still I cannot believe it." "Thanks to your care," said Oswald, "I have recovered a life which I was on the point of losing; that life belongs to my country in time of war. If I can unite myself to you, we will not part, and I will restore you to your name and rank in England. If this too happy destiny be denied me, I will return to the enjoyment of peace in Italy; I will remain long with you, and will not change your condition in any respect except by giving you one more faithful friend." "Ah!" said Corinna, "you will not change my

condition when you have become my only interest in the world, when I have drunk of that intoxicating potion which dispenses either happiness or death ! But tell me, at least, when is your departure to take place ? How many days have I still left ?” “ Dear friend,” said Oswald, pressing her to his heart, “ I protest that I will not leave you these three months, and perhaps not even then—” “ Three months !” exclaimed Corinna, “ then I have all that time to live ; ’tis a long time—a longer than I had expected. Come, I am better, three months are something,” said she, with a mixture of pain and joy, which made a deep impression upon Oswald. Both then silently entered a carriage, which conveyed them to Naples.

CHAPTER II.

ON their arrival at the hotel, they found the prince Castel-Forte waiting for them. A report was circulated that Lord Nelvil had married Corinna, and though this information gave the prince great pain, yet he came himself to ascertain whether it was true, and to court the society of his friend, even though she might be for ever united to another. Corinna's melancholy, the state of dejection in which he, for the first time, beheld her, excited in him considerable uneasiness; but he durst not question her, because she seemed to avoid all conversation on the subject. There are situations of the soul in which we are afraid to unbosom ourselves to any one; a word would often be sufficient to dispel the illusion which holds us in captivity; and illusion in passionate sentiments, of

whatever nature they may be, is attended with this peculiarity, that we spare ourselves as we would spare a friend whom we should be afraid of distressing if we were to tell him the plain truth, and that, without perceiving it, we place our grief under the protection of our passion.

Next day Corinna, who was the most unaffected creature in the world, and was far from seeking to produce any effect by her grief, endeavoured to seem gay, to recover her spirits, and even imagined that the best way of securing Oswald's heart, was to appear as amiable as formerly. She therefore began with vivacity an interesting subject of conversation, but she suddenly became confused, and her eyes wandered from one object to another. She who possessed fluency of speech in the highest degree, now hesitated in the choice of words, and sometimes uttered expressions which had no relation to the subject of her conversation. She then laughed at herself, but tho' smiles dimpled her cheeks,

her eyes swam in tears. Oswald was deeply affected with the pain which he caused her : he wished to have a private conversation with her, but every opportunity for this she carefully avoided.

“ What do you want with me ? ” said she to him one day, when he urgently desired to speak to her. “ I am vexed, and that is all. I prided myself a little upon my talents ; I was fond of glory ; the applause even of indifferent persons was the object of my ambition ; but at present, I give myself no concern about any thing, and it is not happiness, but a severe disappointment that has weaned me from those empty pleasures. I do not mean to accuse you ; I was myself the cause of it ; but, perhaps, I shall triumph over it at last. How many things are constantly passing in the recesses of the soul that we can neither foresee nor direct ! But I will do you justice, Oswald ; the pain I suffer afflicts you ; I see it does. I likewise feel

pity for you ; why is not this sentiment adapted to us both ? Alas ! it may apply to all that has life, without being guilty of many mistakes."

Oswald was not, at this moment, less miserable than Corinna. He loved her tenderly ; but his history had injured her in his way of thinking, and in his affections. It appeared clear to him that his father had foreseen all the circumstances relating to him, and that it would shew a contempt for his warnings were he to make Corinna his wife. Nevertheless, he was unable to renounce her, and was involved in the same embarrassments as those from which he hoped that the knowledge of his friend's history would have relieved him. She, on her part, had not always wished to be united by the conjugal tie to Oswald ; and had she been certain that he would never leave her, she would have wanted nothing more to make her happy ; but she was sufficiently acquainted

with his disposition to know that he had no idea of happiness except in domestic life, and that he could not relinquish his intention of marrying her, without loving her less. Oswald's departure for England she looked for as a signal of death ; she knew the powerful influence which the manners and opinions of that country had over his mind ; that it was in vain he formed the plan of passing his life with her in Italy : she did not doubt that when he should revisit his native land, he would dread the idea of leaving it a second time. She knew also that all her power consisted in her charms, and what is this power during absence ? What are the recollections of the fancy, when you are surrounded on all sides by the force and the reality of a social order which has so much the more weight as it is founded on noble and pure ideas ?

Tortured by these reflections, Corinna would have gladly exerted some authority

over these sentiments she felt for Oswald. She endeavoured to amuse herself by conversing with the Prince Castel-Forte on the subjects which had always been particularly interesting to her, literature and the fine arts; but when Oswald entered her apartment, his dignified demeanor, a melancholy look which he cast upon Corinna, and seemed to say to her: *Why would you renounce me?* destroyed all her projects. Twenty times Corinna resolved to tell Lord Nelvil that this irresolution displeased her, and that she had determined to leave him; but she saw him sometimes lean his head upon his hand, like a man oppressed with melancholy, sometimes heave a sigh, at others walk pensively along the sea-shore, or raise his eyes towards heaven when any harmonious sounds struck his ear, and these simple motions, whose magic was known to her alone, suddenly frustrated all her efforts. The accent, the physiognomy, a certain grace in every gesture, reveal to love the

inmost recesses of the soul, and perhaps it was true that a character of such apparent coldness as that of Lord Nelvil could not be fathomed but by her who loved him. Impartiality, as it guesses at nothing, can only judge from that which is obvious to all. Corinna, in the silence of reflection, considered by what means she had formerly been successful when she thought herself in love : she called to her aid her spirit of observation, which easily discovered the smallest failings; she endeavoured to excite her imagination to represent Oswald with less attractive features; but she could find in him nothing but what was noble, simple, and moving, and how could she deny to a character and a mind so perfectly unaffected the charms which she was conscious they possessed ! Nothing but affectation can give rise to these sudden alarms of the heart, astonished at having loved.

There existed besides, between Oswald

and Corinna, a most extraordinary and all-powerful sympathy. Their tastes were not the same; their opinions seldom agreed, and yet in the recesses of their souls existed similar mysteries, emotions proceeding from the same source, in a word, a certain secret resemblance which seemed to argue one and the same nature, though it had been differently modified by exterior circumstances. Corinna, therefore, perceived, and not without affright, that she had strengthened her affection for Oswald, by observing him anew, by examining him more minutely, and by obstinately resisting the impression which he made upon her.

She proposed to the Prince Castel-Forte to return with them to Rome; and Lord Nelvil perceived that this was the result of her wish to avoid being alone with him. Though it distressed him, he made no objection; he knew not whether what he was able to do for Corinna would be

sufficient to make her happy, and this idea rendered him timid. Nevertheless she wished that he might refuse the company of the Prince Castel-Forte ; but she did not say so. Their situation was not more simple than before ; there was as yet no dissimulation between them, and nevertheless Corinna made a proposal which she hoped Oswald would reject ; thus an affection, which, for six months, had afforded them almost unalloyed felicity, began to be interrupted.

They returned by the way of Capua and Gaeta, and Corinna's mind was occupied with painful recollections when she again beheld the places through which she had shortly before passed with such delight. The beauty of nature, which now in vain invited her to happiness, aggravated her melancholy. When this serene sky does not dissipate grief, its smiling appearance increases the pain of the sufferer by the contrast. They arrived in

the delightful cool of the evening at Terraccina, and the same sea dashed its billows against the same rock. After supper Corinna disappeared ; uneasy at her absence Oswald went in search of her, and his heart, like that of Corinna, guided him to the spot where they had rested on their way to Naples. At a distance he perceived Corinna on her knees before the rock on which they had sat ; and looking at the moon, he observed that luminary covered with a thin cloud, as she had been two months before at the same hour. At the approach of Oswald Corinna rose, and pointing to the moon, said : “ Was I not right to believe in omens ? But is it not true that the heavens are not without compassion ? The moon apprized me of future events, and now see, she is in mourning for me. Be sure, Oswald, to take notice if the same cloud does not pass over the moon when I die.” — “ Corinna ! Corinna ! ” exclaimed Lord Nelvil, have I deserved that you should

make me die of grief? This you might easily do, I assure you; speak but once more in the same manner, and you will see me sink lifeless at your feet. But what is my crime? You are a person whose manner of thinking renders you independent of public opinion; you live in a country where that opinion is never severe, and even if it were, your genius would enable you to triumph over it. I am determined, let what will happen, to pass my days with you; this is my resolution: whence, then, proceeds your uneasiness? If I cannot be your husband, without violating a sentiment which shares with you the empire of my soul, would you not love me sufficiently to find happiness in my affection, and in the consecration of my whole life to your felicity." "Oswald," said Corinna, "if I could believe that we were never to be parted, I should wish for nothing more; but"—"Have you not the ring, the sacred pledge?"—"I will return it you,"

replied she. "No, never," said he.—
"Ah! I will return it you," continued she, "whenever you wish to have it again; and if you should cease to love me, this very ring will apprize me of it. Does not an ancient tradition inform us that the diamond is more faithful than man, and that it becomes dull when he who gave it proves perfidious?" (4) "Corinna," said Oswald, "do you talk of perfidy? Your understanding is disturbed; you no longer know me."—"Pardon, Oswald, pardon!" exclaimed Corinna; "but in profound passions, the heart is suddenly endowed with a miraculous instinct, and sufferings are oracles. What then means this painful palpitation which heaves my bosom? Ah! my friend, I should not mind it, if it were only the forerunner of my death."

So saying, Corinna hastily withdrew; she was afraid to converse any longer with Oswald; she took no delight in grief, and

endeavoured to efface the impressions of melancholy, but they returned with redoubled violence. The following day, when they were crossing the Pontine marshes, Oswald's attentions to Corinna were more tender than they had been the first time. She received them with benignity and gratitude; but in her look there was something which said: *Why will you not let me die?*

CHAPTER III.

HOW desert Rome appears to the traveller returning from Naples. He enters by the gate of St. John de Lateran ; he passes through long, solitary streets ; the noise of Naples, its great population, and the bustle of the inhabitants, accustom him to a certain degree of motion which at first makes him think Rome exceedingly dull. After some time he is again pleased with the latter : but when a person is habituated to a life of dissipation, he always feels a melancholy sensation in silent reflection.

A residence at Rome, however, in the season of the year, which it then happened to be, that is, the conclusion of July, is extremely dangerous. The insalubrity of the air renders several quarters uninha-

bitable, and the contagion often spreads over the whole city. This year, in particular, the alarm was greater than usual, and every face bore the impression of secret terror.

On her arrival, Corinna found at the threshold, a monk who requested permission to bless her house, in order to preserve it from the contagion. Corinna complied, and the priest went through all the apartments, sprinkling them with holy water, and repeating Latin prayers, in the middle of each. Lord Nelvil smiled at this ceremony; Corinna was affected. "I find," said she to him, "a charm which I cannot describe, all that appertains to religion, I might even say, to superstition, when there is nothing hostile or intolerant in that superstition. How necessary is the divine aid for those whose sentiments deviate from the ordinary circle of life! In my opinion superior minds have particular occasion for a supernatural protec-

tion.”—“That occasion doubtless exists,” replied Lord Nelvil; “but can you be satisfied with that?—“I never refuse,” answered Corinna, “a prayer in association with mine, by whomsoever it is offered.” You are right,” said Lord Nelvil—giving his purse for the use of the poor to the aged and timid priest who departed with benedictions on them both.

As soon as Corinna’s friends heard of her arrival, they hastened to see her: none of them were astonished at her returning without being united to Lord Nelvil; none, at least, enquired the causes which had prevented their union: the pleasure they felt at seeing her again was so great as to efface every other idea. Corinna endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to appear the same; she went to contemplate the master-pieces of art which formerly gave her such exquisite delight, but sadness was now mingled with all her sensations. She walked sometimes to the Vil a

Borghese, at others near the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the aspect of those places of which she was once so fond, now made her melancholy. She could no longer indulge in those pleasing reveries, which while they impress upon the mind the instability of all enjoyments, impart to them a still more moving character. A settled melancholy took possession of her mind; nature, who only speaks in vague terms, can do us no good when a positive inquietude has usurped the dominion of the heart.

In the intercourse between Corinna and Oswald, there was a constraint that was absolutely painful: it was not actual wretchedness, for amidst profound emotions which it occasions, it sometimes relieves the oppressed heart, and causes a flash which is capable of revealing every thing, to burst from the gloom. It was a reciprocal reserve, vain attempts to escape from the circumstances which op-

pressed them both, and excited in them a mutual discontent; for, can we suffer without accusing what we love as the cause of our pain? Would not a look, a word be sufficient to erase every disagreeable impression! But this look, this word, does not come when it is expected, does not come when it is necessary. Love is not governed by motives; it seems rather to be a divine power which thinks and feels within us, without our being able to influence it either one way or another.

A contagious distemper, more violent than had been known for a long time, suddenly broke out at Rome. A young female was attacked with it, and her family and friends who refused to quit her, perished with her; the inhabitants of the next house shared the same fate; at every hour of the day that fraternity, whose members dressed in white and with covered faces, accompany the dead to the church, was seen passing through the streets of

Rome. . You would take them for shades, or spirits come to fetch the deceased. The latter are laid with their faces uncovered upon a kind of bier; nothing but a piece of yellow or rose-coloured satin is thrown over the feet, and the children frequently amuse themselves by playing with the ice-cold hands of the corpse. This spectacle, at once terrible and familiar, is accompanied with the dismal and monotonous murmuring of certain psalms: it is a music without modulation, in which the accent of the human soul is never heard.

One evening when Lord Nelvil and Corinna were together, and Lord Nelvil suffered great pain from the sentiment of melancholy and constraint which he observed in Corinna, he heard under a window those dull and dismal tones which announced a funeral. He listened to them for some time in silence, and then said to Corinna, "perhaps to-morrow I may like-

wise be attacked by this disease, against which there is no defence, and you will regret not having spoken a few tender words to your friend, on the day which may be the last of his life. Corinna, death stares us both in the face ; are there not evils sufficient in nature, that we must mutually wound each other's heart?" Corinna was immediately struck with the idea of the danger which threatened Oswald, in the midst of the contagion, and she intreated him to leave Rome. To this request he most positively refused to accede ; she then proposed that they should travel together to Venice ; he joyfully agreed, for as he saw the contagion daily extending its ravages, he began to be seriously alarmed for Corinna.

The day after the next was fixed for their departure. On the morrow Lord Nelvil did not see Corinna, because he was engaged with one of his friends, an Englishman, who was leaving Rome.

Next morning he received a letter from Corinna, informing him that business of the highest importance had suddenly obliged her to set out for Florence, and that she would meet him in a fortnight at Venice. She requested him to go by way of Ancona, for which place she gave him a commission which seemed of some consequence. The style of the letter was affectionate and calm; and Oswald thought Corinna's language more tender and serene than it had been at any time since their departure from Naples. He therefore gave implicit credit to the contents of the letter, and was preparing for his departure, when he conceived a desire to see Corinna's house once more before he left Rome. He went thither, found it shut up, and knocked at the door; the old woman who took care of it, informed him that her mistress and all the servants were gone, but not another word could he obtain in answer to any of his questions. He then proceeded to the house of Prince

Castel-Forte, who knew nothing of Corinna, and was highly astonished that she had given him no intention of her intended departure. Lord Nelvil, now became quite uneasy, and resolved to go to Tivoli to see Corinna's steward, who resided there, and must have received some orders from her.

He mounted his horse, and, urged on by his agitation, went with extraordinary speed to the house of Corinna. All the doors were open : he entered, hastened through several apartments without seeing any person, and at length reached one, in which, through the darkness which pervaded it, he observed Corinna extended on her bed, and Theresina only at her side. On recognizing her he uttered a shriek which brought Corinna to herself ; she perceived him, and raising herself exclaimed : " do not approach, I entreat you ; I shall die if you come near me ! " Oswald was struck with horror ; he ima-

gined that his friend suspected him of some secret crime, which she believed she had all at once discovered; that he was hated and despised; and falling on his knees, he expressed his apprehension with an agitation and despair which suddenly suggested to Corinna the idea of availing herself of his mistake, and she commanded him to leave her for ever, as though he had actually been guilty.

Thunderstruck at this reception, he was going out and on the point of quitting her, when Theresina exclaimed; "Ah! my lord, and will you abandon my good mistress? She has sent every body away, and was even unwilling that I should attend her, because she has the contagious disease!"—At these words, which instantly explained to Oswald the affectionate artifice of Corinna, he threw himself into her arms with such transport and emotion as he had never felt before in his life. In vain Corinna strove to keep him

at a distance, in vain she vented her indignation on Theresina ; Oswald authoritatively made a sign to Theresina to retire, then pressing Corinna to his bosom, and bedewing her with his tears : “ Now,” cried he, “ now, you shall not die without me, and if the fatal poison circulates in your veins, thanks be to heaven, I have inhaled it on your bosom.”— “ Dear, but cruel Oswald,” said Corinna, “ what torment you doom me to suffer ! O my God ! since he is resolved not to live without me, permit not this angel of light to perish ! O no ! I am sure thou wilt not !”—Corinna’s strength forsook her as she finished these words. For eight days she was in the greatest danger. In her delirium, she was incessantly repeating these injunctions : “ take Oswald away from me. Don’t let him know where I am !” When she came to herself and perceived him, she would say ; “ Oswald ! Oswald ! are you there ? In death, then, as in life we shall be united !”

When she saw him look pale, overcome with terror, she called in her distress to the assistance of Lord Nelvil, the physicians who had given her a proof of uncommon attachment in not quitting her.

Oswald continually held the burning hand of Corinna between his own ; he always drank out of the same glass with her, and sought with such eagerness every opportunity of sharing the danger of his friend, that she herself ceased to oppose his passionate attachment, and leaning her head on the shoulder of Lord Nelvil, she resigned herself entirely to his will. Is it not possible for two beings, who love with such ardor as to feel that they could not exist without each other, to become so identified as to wish to share in every vicissitude, even in death itself? (5) Fortunately Lord Nelvil did not catch the disease, notwithstanding his assiduous attendance on Corinna. She recovered ; but another malady penetrated deeper than.

ever into her heart. The generosity, the love which her friend had shewn towards her, heightened the affection which she before felt for him.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was therefore agreed that, to avoid the baleful air of Rome, Corinna and Lord Nelvil should proceed to Venice together. They had again fallen into their habitual silence with respect to their future projects; but they spoke of their mutual passion with more tenderness than ever, and Corinna shunned with as much care as Lord Nelvil, the mention of the subject which disturbed the delightful harmony that subsisted between them. A day passed in her company was such a treat; he appeared to take such delight in the conversation of his friend; he watched all her motions, and studied her wishes with an assiduity so constant and uninterrupted, that it seemed impossible for him to exist in any other situation, or that he could impart so much felicity,

without being happy himself. Corinna thought herself secure in this very felicity which she enjoyed. After some months passed in such a state, we are ready to believe that it is inseparable from existence, and that this only is worthy of being called life. Corinna's agitation, therefore, was again pacified, and again her providence came to her aid.

Nevertheless, the day preceding that on which she was to leave Rome, she was overpowered with a sensation of profound melancholy. She feared and yet wished that she might be leaving it for ever. At night she was unable to sleep; she heard a company of Romans of both sexes walking by moon-light and singing under her windows. She could not withstand the inclination to follow them, and thus once more to traverse her beloved city. She dressed herself, directing her carriage and servants to follow at a distance; and throwing a veil over her that she might

not be known, soon overtook the company who had stopped on the bridge of St. Angelo, opposite to Adrian's Mausoleum. She fancied she beheld in the air the mighty shade of Adrian, astonished to find on earth no other traces of his power than a tomb. The troop proceeded still singing, amid the silence of the night, at that hour when the happy are enjoying peaceful slumbers. This music, so sweet and so harmonious, seemed intended to soothe the sufferings of the afflicted. Corinna, followed; allured by their resistible magic of melody, which banishes the sense of fatigue, and enables you to skim the surface of the earth like a bird.

The musicians halted before the columns of Antoninus and of Trajan. They then saluted the obelisk of St. John de Lateran, singing before each of those structures. The ideal language of music was well adapted to the ideal expression of the monuments; enthusiasm reigned su-

preme in the city during the slumber of all vulgar interests. At length the band of singers retired and left Corinna alone near the Coliseum. She felt a strong inclination to enter it, in order to bid adieu to ancient Rome. Those who have seen the Coliseum only in the day-time, are ignorant of the impression which it is capable of producing. The sun of Italy is so resplendent as to give to every thing an air of gaiety ; but the moon is the luminary of ruins. Sometimes, through the apertures in the amphitheatre, which seems to touch the sky, part of the vault of heaven appears, like a dark blue curtain placed behind the edifice. The plants which adhere to its shattered walls, and grow in solitary places, assume the colours of night ; the soul shudders and is moved at the same time on finding itself alone with nature.

One side of the edifice has sustained much greater injury than the other : thus

two contemporaries struggle with different success against time, he overthrows the weakest; the other still resists, and soon afterwards falls. "Solemn retreat," exclaimed Corinna, "where at this moment not a living being exists with me; where my voice is answered by itself alone; how are the storms of the passions appeased by this calm of nature, who so quietly suffers whole generations to pass away before her! Has the universe no other end than man, and are all these wonders created only to reflect themselves in our souls? Oswald, Oswald, why then should I love you with such idolatry? Why then should I resign myself to these sentiments of a day—of a day, in comparison of the infinite hopes which unite us to the Deity? O my God! if it be true, as I believe it is, that the more capable we are of reflecting, the more we admire thee, grant that I may find in contemplation a refuge from the torments of the heart. Is not that noble friend, whose affectionate looks can never

be effaced from my memory a being transitory like myself ! But yonder among the stars dwells an eternal love, which can alone satisfy the immensity of our desires." Corinna long remained wrapt in a profound reverie ; at length, with slow step she took the way that led toward her habitation.

Before she returned home she wished to visit St. Peter's, there to await the return of day, to ascend to the cupola, and at that height to bid farewell to Rome. On approaching St. Peter's, her first thought was to represent that structure as it would appear, when it should in its turn become a ruin, an object of admiration to future ages. Its columns now standing, she figured to herself partly prostrate on the ground, its portico destroyed, its cupola fallen in ; but even then the obelisk of the Egyptians would outlive more modern ruins ; that people laboured for a terrestrial eternity. Aurora

at length appeared, and from the summit of St. Peter's Corinna contemplated Rome, placed in the midst of an uncultivated country, like an oasis in the deserts of Lybia. Devastation surrounds it; but the multitude of steeples, cupolas, obelisks, and columns, which rise from every part of it, and St. Peter's towering far above even these, give a truly wonderful beauty to its appearance. This city possesses charms which may be called individual. You love it as you would an animated object; its ruins are friends to whom you bid adieu.

Corinna addressed her regret to the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Castle of St. Angelo, and to all those places, the sight of which had so often renewed the pleasures of her imagination. "Adieu," cried she, "thou land of recollections; adieu, happy retreat, where life depends neither on society nor on circumstances; where enthusiasm is kindled through the eyes,

and by the intimate union between the soul and external objects. I am about to leave thee; I am going to accompany Oswald, ignorant of the lot that he destines for me,—he, whom I prefer to that independence which has rendered my life so happy! I shall perhaps return, but with a wounded heart, a languid soul, and even you, ye fine arts, ye ancient monuments, thou sun whom I shall have so often invoked in the gloomy countries to which I shall be exiled—you will no longer be able to afford me any consolation.”

Corinna shed tears as she uttered these words; but the thought of letting Oswald depart without her never entered her mind. The resolutions which proceed from the heart have this peculiarity, that when we take them, we judge, we censure them with severity, but yet adopt them without any real hesitation. When passion obtains the dominion over a superior mind,

it entirely separates the understanding from the action, and to mislead the one, it merely has occasion to disturb the other.

So picturesque was the appearance given by the wind to Corinna's hair and veil, and so remarkable was the expression they imparted to her figure, that at day-break some of the women of the lower class were thrown into great amazement on observing such a female come out of the church at such an hour ; and their Italian imagination representing her as a supernatural being, they fell upon their knees to offer up their invocations to her. Corinna was moved with this striking demonstration of their enthusiasm, and heaved another sigh at the thought of leaving a people of such lively feelings.

But this was not all ; Corinna had still to undergo the trial of parting from her friends. They contrived entertainments in order to detain her a few days longer :

They composed verses repeating to her in a thousand ways that she must not leave them ; and at last, at her departure, they accompanied her to the distance of twenty miles from Rome. She was deeply affected : Oswald hung his head with confusion ; he reproached himself for tearing her from so many enjoyments, and yet he knew that to propose to her to stay behind would have been still more cruel. He appeared selfish in thus hurrying Corinna away from Rome, but he was not so in reality ; for the idea of afflicting her by going without her, influenced him more powerfully than even that of the happiness which he enjoyed in her company. He knew not how to proceed, and Venice was the limit of his present plan. He had written to Scotland to one of his father's friends, to inquire whether his regiment would soon be actively employed in the war, and he had not yet received an answer. Sometimes he formed the design of taking Corinna with him to England ; but

he instantly recollected that he should ruin her reputation for ever, if he carried her into that country without being his wife: at others, he thought of marrying her privately before his departure, in order to mitigate the pain of separation; but this idea also he, a moment afterwards, rejected. "Are there secrets for the dead?" he would say to himself, "and what shall I gain by making a mystery of an union which is prevented by nothing but veneration for a tomb!" In short, he was exceedingly unhappy. His mind, which wanted strength in every thing connected with the feelings, was cruelly agitated by conflicting affections. Corinna resigned herself a willing victim into his hands; amidst her pain she cheered herself with the ideas of the sacrifices she was making to him, and of the generous imprudence of her heart, while Oswald, responsible for the fate of another, was every moment knitting fresh bonds, which there was no possibility of dissolving, and

could neither satisfy his passion nor his conscience, since nothing but their contending emotions made him sensible of both.

At the moment when all Corinna's friends were taking leave of her, they earnestly recommended her happiness to Lord Nelvil. They congratulated him on being beloved by so distinguished a female ; and the secret reproach which these congratulations seemed to convey, gave new pain to Oswald. Corinna perceived it, and cut short these testimonies of friendship, gratifying as they were. When, however, she had lost sight of her friends, who turned from time to time to salute her, she said to Lord Nelvil: "Oswald, I have now no other friend but you." Oh ! how deeply he felt at that moment the necessity of swearing that he would make her his wife ! He was ready to do so ; but when the mind has long smarted under affliction, an invincible mistrust prevents

you from following first emotions, and irrevocable resolutions, even such as the heart itself commands, cannot be taken without trembling. Corinna thought she could discover what was passing in Oswald's soul, and from a feeling of delicacy, she immediately turned the conversation to the country through which they were travelling.

CHAPTER V.

IT was the beginning of September. In the plains the weather was most delightful, but when they reached the Apennines, they began to feel something of the severity of winter. Lofty mountains frequently affect the temperature of the climate, and you seldom enjoy a genial air, in conjunction with the pleasure arising from their picturesque appearance. One night, when Corinna and Lord Nelvil were both in their carriage, a tremendous hurricane suddenly overtook them; they were enveloped in profound darkness, and the horses, which are so mettlesome in those countries that it is necessary to harness them by surprise, hurried them along with inconceivable rapidity. They both felt a pleasing emotion excited in their bosoms. "Oh!"

said Lord Nelvil, “ that we could be carried far from all that I know upon earth, that we could ascend the mountains, and bound into another world, where we should find my father waiting to receive and to bless us ! Do you wish so too, my dear friend ! ” added he, pressing her closely to his bosom. Corinna’s emotion was equally violent, and she replied ; “ Do with me what you please ; chain me like a slave to your destiny. Did not the slaves of antiquity possess talents, by which they delighted their masters ? Well, Oswald such will I be to you. You will respect her who thus attaches herself to your lot, and you will never suffer her, condemned by the world, to have occasion to blush in your presence.” “ Never ! never ! ” exclaimed Lord Nelvil ; “ I must either obtain all or sacrifice all. I must either be your husband, or die of love at your feet suppressing the transports with which you inspire me. But I hope, confidently hope, that nothing shall

prevent me from being publicly united to you, and priding myself in your love. Ah! tell me, I 'conjure you, have I not lost something in your affections on account of the conflicting sensations which rend my heart? Do you imagine that my love is less ardent?" As he said this, his accents were so impassioned, that he renewed for a moment the highest degree of confidence in the bosom of Corinna. The purest and tenderest affection animated the hearts of both.

Meanwhile, the horses stopped. Lord Nelvil alighted first: he was chilled with the piercing wind which blew, but which he had not perceived in the carriage. He might have fancied himself on the shores of England; the keen air which he breathed was no longer like that of beauteous Italy, nor did it, like that of the south, encourage a sweet oblivion of every thing but love. Oswald soon relapsed into his former train of painful

reflections, and this was but too easily perceived by Corinna, who was acquainted with the restlessness of his imagination.

The next day they arrived at our Lady of Loretto, which is situated on the summit of a mountain, commanding a view of the Adriatic sea. While Lord Nelvil went to give some orders respecting the arrangements for their journey, Corinna proceeded to the church, where the image of the Blessed Virgin is inclosed in the midst of the choir, in a small square chapel covered with very remarkable basso-relievos. The marble pavement which surrounds this sanctuary, is worn hollow by the pilgrims who go round it upon their knees. Corinna was moved as she contemplated these marks of piety, and falling upon her knees on the same pavement which had been pressed by such multitudes of unhappy persons, she offered up her prayers to the image of bounty, the symbol of celestial sensibility. Os-

wald found Corinna prostrate before the temple and bathed in tears. He could not comprehend how a person of so superior a mind could thus conform to popular customs. She read his thoughts in his looks, and said to him: "Dear Oswald, is it not often the case that we dare not venture to supplicate the Supreme Being himself? How can we communicate to him all the distresses of our hearts? Is it not soothing at such times to consider a woman as the intercessor for feeble human creatures? she herself endured sufferings on this earth, since she was once an inhabitant of it; I prayed to her for you with a lighter blush; but a direct prayer to the Deity is what I could not have ventured to offer."—"Nor can I always," replied Oswald. "I have also my intercessor, the guardian angel of children, I mean their father; and since mine has been in heaven, I have often been favoured with extraordinary succour, moments of tranquillity resulting

from no perceptible cause, and unexpected consolations. It is on this miraculous protection that I rely for relief from my present embarrassment. "I understand you," said Corinna; there is nobody in my opinion, but what entertains a singular and mysterious idea concerning his own fate, a circumstance which we have always dreaded, and which, though improbable, has nevertheless taken place; the punishment of a fault, though it is impossible to trace the connection between our misfortunes and it, frequently strikes the imagination. From my infancy, I have ever felt a dread of living in England; on the contrary, regret at not being able to live there; will perhaps plunge me into despair; and I am convinced, that in this respect there is something invincible in my fate, an obstacle against which I struggle and contend in vain. Each person forms in his own mind a conception of his life totally different from what it actually appears. We have a confused no-

tion of a supernatural power which acts unknown to us, and is disguised under the form of exterior circumstances, while itself is the sole cause of every thing that happens. Dear friend, minds capable of reflection are continually plunging into the abyss of themselves, without ever finding a bottom!" At this address of Corinna, Oswald was astonished that she could be susceptible of such impassioned sentiments, and at the same time be sufficiently collected thus to scrutinize her own impressions. "No," thought he frequently, "no; he who has enjoyed the company of such a woman, cannot be happy in any other society in the world."

They contrived to enter Ancona after dark, because Lord Nelvil was fearful lest he should be recognised in that town. Notwithstanding his precautions, he was known, and the next morning all the inhabitants thronged about the house in which he was. Corinna was awakened

by shouts of "Long live Lord Nelvil ! Long live our benefactor !" which resounded on every side. She startled at these words, arose in haste, and mingled with the crowd to feast herself with the praises of the man she loved. Lord Nelvil being informed that he was vehemently called for by the people, was at length under the necessity of appearing. He thought that Corinna was still asleep, and that she would remain ignorant of what was passing ; but how great was his astonishment to find her in the midst of the street, already known, and already beloved by the whole grateful multitude, who requested her to be their interpreter. Corinna's imagination took delight in all extraordinary circumstances ; this imagination was her delight, and sometimes her failing. She thanked Lord Nelvil, in the name of the people, and performed her part with such grace and dignity, that all the inhabitants of Ancona were enchanted. " You saved us," said she ; " to you.

we owe our lives." When she advanced to present in their name, to Lord Nelvil, the crown of oak and laurel which they had prepared for him, she was overcome with an emotion that cannot be described; she felt intimidated as she approached Oswald. At this moment, the people (who in Italy are so ardent and enthusiastic) prostrated themselves before him, and Corinna involuntarily dropped on one knee as she presented the crown. Lord Nelvil was so agitated, that, unable longer to endure this public scene, and the homage paid him by her, whom he adored, that he led her with him far away from the crowd.

At their departure Corinna, bathed in tears, returned thanks to all the good inhabitants of Ancona, who accompanied them with their benedictions, while Oswald kept out of sight at the back of the carriage, and incessantly repeated: "Corinna at my feet! Corinna, on whose

very footsteps I would prostrate myself! Have I deserved this affront? Do you think me infected with that unworthy pride?"—"By no means," said Corinna, interrupting him; "but I was suddenly overcome by that sentiment of respect which a woman always feels for the man she loves. The exterior marks of homage are directed to us; but in truth, in nature, it is woman that cherishes a profound veneration for him whom she has chosen for her defender." "Yes," cried Lord Nelvil, "I call heaven to witness, that I will be your defender to the latest moment of my life. So much sensibility, and so much genius shall not in vain apply for protection to my love." "Alas!" replied Corinna, "I want nothing but this love, and what promise can ensure it to me? But as I feel that you love me at present more than ever, let us not extinguish this returning flame.—"Returning!" interrupted Oswald.—"Yes," said Corinna, "I shall

not retract the expression ; but we will not enter into any explanation," continued she, " making a gentle sign to Lord Nelvil to be silent."

CHAPTER VI.

TWO days they followed the shores of the Adriatic ; but that sea does not produce, in the Romagna, the same effect as the Ocean, or even as the Mediterranean ; the road bounds its waves, and its shores are clothed with verdure ; it is not thus that we represent to ourselves the formidable empire of tempests. At Rimini and Cesena, we quit the soil rendered classic by the events of Roman history ; and the last recollection which presents itself to the mind is the Rubicon, crossed by Cæsar when he resolved to make himself master of Rome. By a singular contrast, not far from the Rubicon is now seen the republic of St. Marino, as if this last feeble vestige of liberty had been destined to exist close to the spot where the

republic of the world was destroyed. After leaving Ancona, you gradually advance into a country which exhibits an appearance totally different from that of the ecclesiastical state. The Bolognese, Lombardy, the environs of Ferrara, and of Rovigo, are remarkable for their beauty and high cultivation: you no longer behold that poetic devastation which announced the approach to Rome, and the dreadful events which have there taken place. You then leave the pines*, “the mourning dress of summer, and the ornament of winter;” the cone-bearing cypresses†, the images of obelisks; the mountains and the sea. Nature, like the traveller, by degrees bids adieu to the genial rays of the south; at first the orange-tree ceases to grow in the open air, and its place is supplied by the olive, whose

* Les pins deuil de l'été, parure des hivers.—

M. DE SABRAN.

† Coniferi cupressi.—VIRGIL.

pale verdure and light foliage seems adapted to the groves inhabited by the shades of Elysium. A few leagues further on the olive itself disappears.

On entering the Bolognese, you discover a smiling plain, in which the vines forming festoons from one elm-tree to another, give the whole country the appearance of being decorated for a festival. Corinna was moved by the contrast between the state of her mind, and the resplendent gaiety of the country which opened to her view. "Ah!" said she, sighing, to Lord Nelvil, "should nature have presented so many images of felicity to friends who are perhaps on the eve of separation!" — "No, they shall never part," said Oswald; "each day I feel myself more incapable of enduring such a separation. The unalterable goodness of your temper gives additional strength to the passion with which you inspire me, I am happy in your company, as though

you did not possess the most admirable genius, or rather because you do possess it; for real superiority is accompanied with perfect good temper. Content with one's self, with nature, and with others, what painful sensation is it possible to feel!"

They arrived at Ferrara, one of the dullest cities of Italy, for it is both extensive and deserted. The few inhabitants, whom you meet at long intervals in the streets, walk with a slow pace, as if they were sure of having time for every purpose. It is scarcely possible to believe that in this very place existed the most splendid of courts, that which was celebrated by Ariosto and Tasso. Here are still shewn manuscripts in the hand-writing of those poets, and in that of the author of *Il Pastor Fido*.

Ariosto knew the art of living peacefully in the midst of a court; but the

house, is still shewn at Ferrara in which Tasso was confined as a lunatic. It is impossible to read without emotion, the multitude of letters in which the unfortunate bard calls death to release him. Tasso had that peculiar organization of talent which is so formidable to the possessor. His imagination recoiled upon itself; his perfect knowledge of the secrets of the soul, his fecundity in ideas proceeded only from his having endured many afflictions. "What doth he know," says a prophet, "who hath never suffered."

Corinna had, in many respects, this kind of organization. Her understanding was more lively, and her impressions were more varied; but at the same time her imagination required to be managed with extreme caution, for instead of diverting her from the subject of her griefs, it tended to augment their violence. Lord Nelson was mistaken in supposing, as he often did, that Corinna's brilliant faculties could

furnish her with the means of being happy independent of her affections. When a woman of genius is endued with real sensibility, her sorrows are multiplied by her faculties themselves ; she makes discoveries in her own afflictions as in the rest of nature, and the miseries of the heart being inexhaustible, the more ideas she has, the more she feels it.

CHAPTER VII.

YOU embark on the Brenta in order to reach Venice, and on either side of the canal are seen the palaces of the Venetians, large and somewhat dilapidated, like the magnificence of Italy. The style of their embellishments is absurd and bears no resemblance to the antique taste. The Venetian architecture seems to have received its character from the commerce with the East; it is a mixture of the Moorish and Gothic, which excites curiosity without pleasing the imagination. The poplar, that tree regular as architecture, borders the canal throughout almost its whole length. The sky is of a vivid azure, which forms a contrast with the lively verdure of the country; this verdure is maintained by the excessive abundance of water. Thus the earth and the sky are

of two colors, whose contrast is so glaring that Nature herself appears to be dressed with a certain degree of art, and the traveller does not find that mysterious negligence and confusion which give such delight in the south of Italy. The aspect of Venice is more astonishing than pleasing; you first fancy you perceive an inundated city; and the reflection is necessary in order to excite the admiration of the genius of mortals who have gained this place of abode from the waters. Naples is built on the sea-shore in the form of an amphitheatre, but Venice, being on perfectly level ground, the steeples resemble the masts of a ship that remains stationary in the midst of the waves. A sentiment of melancholy overcomes the imagination on entering Venice. You take leave of vegetation; not even a fly is to be seen in that place, all the animals are banished from it, and man alone is left to struggle with the waters.

Profound silence pervades this city, whose streets are canals; and the sound of oars is the only interruption of this silence; it is not like the country, for not a tree is to be seen; it is not like a town, for you hear not the least motion; it is not like a ship, for you never move from the spot; it is an abode which a tempest converts into a prison, for there are moments when you can neither go out of the city, nor out of your own house. Among the lower classes at Venice, you meet with people who had never been from one quarter to another, who have never seen the square of St. Mark, and to whom a horse or a tree would be a truly wonderful phenomenon. The black gondolas which glide along the canals resemble coffins or cradles, the first and the last receptacle of man. At night nothing is seen passing but the lights in these gondolas, for their dark color then prevents them from being discernible. You would take them for shades skimming the surface of the waters

and guided by a little star. In this place every thing is mysterious, the government, the customs, and love. It certainly affords abundant pleasures for the heart and understanding when you have penetrated into all these secrets; but to strangers the impression of the first moment cannot fail of being peculiarly melancholy.

Corinna who had faith in presentiments, and whose imagination drew presages from every circumstance, said to Lord Nelvil, "what is the reason of the profound melancholy which overwhelms on entering this city? Is it not a sign that some great misfortune will befall me here? Scarcely had she uttered these words, when she heard three discharges of cannon from one of the islands of the Lagoon. Corinna trembled at the report, and inquired the reason of it of her gondoliers. "'Tis a nun who is taking the veil," answered they, "in one of these convents in the midst of the sea. It is customary

among us, for a female, at the moment when she pronounces the religious vows, to throw behind her a nosegay of flowers which she wore during the ceremony. It is emblematic of her renouncing the world ; and the guns which you just now heard, announced it that moment as we entered Venice." Corinna shuddered at this explanation. Oswald felt her hands quite cold in his, and death-like paleness overspread her countenance. " My dear friend," said he, " how can you receive so powerful an impression from the most simple accident ?"—" No," said Corinna, " this is not simple ; believe me, the flowers of life are thrown behind me for ever."—" When I love you more than ever," interrupted Oswald, " when my whole soul is yours—" " These martial thunders, the sound of which, in other places, announces victory or death, are here employed to celebrate the obscure sacrifice of a youthful female. 'Tis an innocent use of those dreadful engines which spread

devastation over the world. 'Tis a solemn warning which a resigned female gives to the rest of her sex who are still struggling with fate."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE power of the government of Venice, during the last years of its existence, consisted almost entirely in the empire of fashion and of the imagination. It had been terrible, but had now become extremely mild ; it had been courageous, but had now become timid ; hatred was easily excited against it, because it had been formidable ; it was easily overthrown, because it had ceased to be so. It was an aristocracy which eagerly sought the popular favour, but which sought it after the manner of despotism ; by amusing the people, not by enlightening them. It is however a very agreeable state for a people to be provided with amusement, especially in a country in which the tastes of the imagination are unfolded by the climate, and the fine arts, even among the lowest

class of society. The people were not presented with the gross pleasures which have a tendency to make them savage, but with music, pictures, *improvisatores*, and festivities; and to these subjects the government paid as much attention as a sultan to his seraglio. It merely required of them, as of women, not to interfere in political affairs, nor to discuss its measures; on these conditions it promised them abundance of amusements, and even a due portion of glory; for the spoils of Constantinople which enrich the churches, the standards of Cyprus and Candia which wave over the public square, the horses of Corinth, are beheld with exultation by the people, and the winged lion of St. Mark is regarded as the emblem of their glory.

The system of the government prohibiting the subjects from devoting their attention to political affairs, and the situation of the city precluding the possibility

of agricultural pursuits, promenades, and the chase, the whole business of the Venetians was amusement. Venice was therefore a city of pleasure. The dialect of the Venetians is soft and light like an agreeable whisper: one cannot conceive how those who resisted the league of Cambray should speak so flexible a language. This dialect is charming when it is consecrated to grace or pleasantry; but when it is used upon graver subjects; when we hear verses upon death with these delicate and almost infantile tones, one would think that this awful event, as thus sung, was a poetical fiction only.

The men in general have more wit at Venice than in the rest of Italy, because their government, such as it is, has often afforded them occasions for thinking; but their imagination is not naturally so ardent as in the south of Italy: and the most of the women, although very amiable, have acquired, from the habitude of living in

the world, a language of *sentimentality*, which, as it does not restrain the freedom of their manners, only introduces affectation into their gallantries. The great merit of the Italians, in the midst of all their failings, is to have no vanity; this want is a little lost at Venice, where there is more of society than in any other city of Italy; and vanity is particularly displayed in society. We are there applauded so fast and so often, that all calculations are instantaneous, and in order to obtain success *we do not trust the times* a single minute. There are however to be found at Venice plenty of traces of the originality and facility of the Italian manners. The ladies of the highest rank receive all their visits in the coffee-houses of the Place of St. Mark, and this awkward confusion hinders their saloons from becoming too seriously an arena for the claims of self love.

There still remains some popular man-

ners and some ancient customs. But these customs always suppose some respect for our ancestors, and a certain weakness of the heart, which does not weary of reflecting on the past, nor of the compassion it excites; the aspect of the city itself is, besides, singularly proper for awakening a crowd of recollections and ideas; the Place of St. Mark completely environed with blue tents, under which a multitude of Turks, Greeks, and Armenians repose, is terminated at its extremity by the church, the exterior of which resembles a Turkish mosque, rather than a christian temple: this place gives an idea of the indolent life of the orientalists, who pass their days in the coffee-houses drinking sherbet and smoking perfumes; we sometimes see at Venice Turks and Armenians pass their lives carelessly lying in uncovered barks with pots of flowers at their feet.

The men and women of the highest

rank never go out without being covered with a black domino ; often also, the gondolas, which are always black, because the system of equality at Venice principally applies to external objects, are managed by gondoliers clothed in white, with pink girdles ; this contrast has something striking ; it may be said that the dress of festivity is abandoned to the common people, while the grandees of the state are always in mourning. In most European cities it is necessary that the imagination of an author should carefully conceal what passes every day, because our customs, and even our luxuries, are not poetical. But at Venice nothing of this kind is vulgar : the canals and the barges form a picturesque view of the most simple events of life.

Upon the slave-quay we continually meet with puppet-shews, charlatans, or tellers of stories, who address themselves in every way to the imaginations of the people ;

the story-tellers are particularly worthy of attention ; it is generally episodes from Tasso and Ariosto that they recite in prose, to the great admiration of those who listen to them. Their audience seated round the speaker in a circle, are for the most part half naked, and immoveable from excess of attention ; glasses of water are brought to them from time to time, which they pay for as they would do for wine in another place ; and this simple refreshment is all these people require while their mind is occupied. The narrator uses the most animated gestures in the world ; his voice is loud, he frets, becomes enraged, and nevertheless it may be seen that he is perfectly tranquil at heart ; and we may say to him what Sappho did to the Bacchante, who was agitated when quite sober : “ Bacchante, since you are not drunk, what do you want with me ? ” Yet the animated pantomime of the inhabitants of the south does not give us any idea of affectation : it is a singular habit

which has been transmitted to them by the Romans, who were also great gesticulators; it flows from their lively, brilliant, and poetic disposition.

The imagination of a people, captivated with pleasures, is easily terrified by the appearance of the power with which the Venetian government seems encompassed. A soldier is never seen at Venice; they would flock to the theatre if by chance one was to appear upon the stage with a drum in any of their comedies; and it would be sufficient for the Sbirro of the state inquisition, carrying a ducat in his cap, to shew himself, in order to restore peace and order among 30,000 men collected on a day of public festivity. This would be a fine trait in their character if it proceeded from respect to their laws; but it was fortified by the terror of the secret measures employed by government for maintaining tranquillity in the state. The prisons, it is singular, are even in the

palace of the doge ; there are cells both above and below his apartment ; the *Lion's Mouth*, into which all the denunciations were thrown, was also in the palace where the chief of the government resides ; the hall, where the state inquisitions sat, was hung with black, and the light entered it from the roof only ; the judgment prematurely resembled a precursor to the condemnation ; the Bridge of Tears, as it is called, leads from the prison for state criminals to the doge's palace. In sailing on the canal, which flows past these prisons, the cries of "*justice ! mercy !*" are constantly heard, and these plaintive and confined voices cannot be distinguished. At length, when a state criminal was condemned, a gondola comes for him in the night time ; he was brought out by a little door opening to the canal, carried to some distance from the city, and drowned in a place of the Lagunes, where all fishing was prohibited ; a horrible idea, which perpetu-

ated the secret even after his death, and did not permit the wretch to hope that his remains, at least, would apprise his friends that he had suffered, and that he was no more !

At the period when Lord Nelvil and Corinna arrived at Venice, nearly a century had elapsed since any such executions had taken place ; but the mystery, which struck the imagination, still existed ; and, far as Lord Nelvil was from interfering in any way with the political interests of a foreign country, yet he felt himself oppressed by that arbitrary justice, without appeal, which threatened every head in Venice.

CHAPTER IX.



“YOU must not,” said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, “ give yourself up to the disagreeable impression alone which these secret methods have made upon you. You must also observe the grand qualities of that senate which made Venice a republic for the nobility, and inspired them formerly with that energy, that aristocratical grandeur, the fruit of liberty, when it is concentrated among a small number. Severe towards each other, you will see them establishing, at least among themselves, the virtues and the rights which ought to belong to all of them ; you will see them as paternal towards their subjects as they should be when we consider the latter class of men merely with respect to their physical well being. In short, you

will find them highly proud of their country, that country which is their property, but which they nevertheless knew how to make the people love also, who in so many respects are excluded from it."

Corinna and Oswald went out together to see the hall where the council of two hundred were then sitting; it is surrounded with portraits of all the doges; but in the room of the portrait of him who was decapitated as a traitor to his country, a black curtain has been painted, upon which is written the day of his death, and the crime for which he suffered. The royal and magnificent habits in which the other doges are clothed, add to the impression made by this horrible black curtain. In this hall there is a picture which represents the last judgment, and another describing the most powerful emperor in the world, Frederick Barbarossa, humiliating himself before the senate of Venice. It is a fine idea thus to unite all that can

exalt the dignity of a government upon the earth, and to curb the same dignity in the sight of Heaven. Corinna and Lord Nelvil went to visit the arsenal: there are before the gates of it two lions sculptured in Greece, and brought from the port of Athens to be the guardians of the Venetian power; immoveable guardians, who can only defend what is respected by every one. The arsenal is filled with naval trophies; the famous ceremony of the nuptials of the doge with the Adriatic Sea; in short, all the institutions of Venice attest their reverence for the sea. In this respect they have some resemblance to the English, and Lord Nelvil felt in a lively manner the interest this resemblance excited.

Corinna conducted him to the summit of the tower called the steeple of St. Mark, which is some distance from the church. From thence we discover the whole city in the midst of the waves, and the immense

dyke which defends it from the sea. In the back ground we descry the shores of Istria and Dalmatia. "Where you see these clouds," said Corinna, "that is Greece. Is not this idea sufficient to excite emotion! There we still find men of a lively imagination, of an enthusiastic character, humbled by their present lot, but destined, perhaps, as well as us, to reanimate at some period the ashes of their ancestors. There is always something that tells us that a country has once existed when its inhabitants blush, at least, for their present state; but in countries which history has never consecrated, we do not even suspect that there is any other destiny than the servile obscurity that has been transmitted to them by their ancestors.

"This Dalmatia, which you perceive here," continued Corinna, "and which was formerly inhabited by so warlike a people, still preserves something savage in its cha-

racter. The Dalmatians know so little of what has passed for these fifteen centuries, that they still call the Romans the *all powerful*. It is true that they shew some knowledge, a little more modern, when they call the English the *warriors of the sea*, because you have often landed in their harbours, but they know nothing of the rest of the world. I shall be pleased in visiting, continued Corinna, every country where there is something original in the manners, the customs, or the language. The civilized world is very meritorious, and we may be soon acquainted with it all; I have already lived long enough for this purpose.”—“When we live near you,” said Lord Nelvil, “we shall never see the end of what may be thought and felt.”—“Heaven grant,” said Corinna, “that the charm may never be exhausted!”

“But let us dedicate a moment,” she continued, “to this Dalmatia; when we

have descended from the height at which we now are, we shall not perceive even the uncertain lines which point out to us this distant country so confusedly, like a recollection in the memory of man ! There are improvisatores among the Dalmatians, savages have theirs also ; they are found among the ancient Greeks ; they exist almost always among people who possess imagination, and no social vanity ; but the natural genius displays itself in epigrams rather than in poetry, in countries where the dread of being an object of mockery makes every one hasten to be the first to seize the weapon : the people, therefore, who have remained nearer to a state of nature have preserved a respect for it which assists the imagination much. *‘ Caverns are sacred,’* say the Dalmatians ; without doubt they express in this manner a vague terror of the secrets of the earth. Their poetry resembles that of Ossian a little, although they are inhabitants of the south ; but there are only

two very distinct ways of thinking of nature; to animate her like the ancients, to perfect her under a thousand brilliant forms, or to allow her to march, like the Scottish bards, wrapt up in the terror of mystery, and in the melancholy inspired by the uncertain and unknown. Since I have known you, Oswald, this last kind of nature has pleased. Formerly I had enough of hope and vivacity to love smiling images, and to enjoy nature, without dreading destiny." "It is I, therefore," said Oswald, "who have damped this fine imagination, to which I have been indebted for the most intoxicating enjoyments of my life." "No," said Corinna, "you cannot be accused of it; it was a deep rooted passion. Talents require an independence of mind, which true love never permits." "Ah!" cried Lord Nelvil, "if it is so, let your genius be silent, and let your heart be wholly mine!" He could not speak these words without emotion, because they promised still more from his

way of expressing them than he said. Corinna embraced him and dared not answer, lest she should derange the gentle impression she experienced.

She felt that she was beloved, and as she was accustomed to live in a country where the men sacrificed every thing to sentiment, she was easily convinced that Lord Nelvil could not separate himself from her: indolent, and in love at the same moment, she imagined that it was sufficient to gain time, and that the danger was past which was no longer mentioned. Corinna lived, in short, as most people live when they are for a long time threatened with some misfortune; they conclude by thinking that it will never appear, merely because it has not yet come upon them.

The air of Venice, and the life led there, are singularly proper for nursing the soul with hopes: the tranquil gliding of the boats produces reverie and idleness.

Sometimes a gondolier, placed upon the bridge of the Rialto, is heard singing a stanza of Tasso, while another gondolier answers him with the subsequent stanza from the other extremity of the canal. The old music of these stanzas resembles the chaunting in the churches, and when nigh to it we are sensible of its monotony; but in the open air, in the evening, when the sounds are prolonged upon the canal, like the reflections of the setting sun, and when the verses of Tasso lend their beauties of sentiment also, to all this collection of imagery and harmony, it is impossible for these songs not to inspire a gentle melancholy. Oswald and Corinna spent whole hours upon the water, seated beside each other, sometimes they would utter a single word, oftener they held each other's hands, and gave themselves up in silence to the vague ideas excited by nature and love.

BOOK XVI.

CHAP. I.

DEPARTURE AND ABSENCE.

AS soon as Corinna's arrival was known at Venice, every one had the greatest curiosity to see her. When she entered one of the coffee-houses of St. Mark, crowds pressed under the galleries of the place in order to have a glance at her ; and every society visited her with the most lively sincerity. She was formerly fond of producing this brilliant effect whenever she shewed herself, and she confessed that naturally admiration had great charms over her. Genius inspires the wants and desires of glory, and there is besides no benefit or pleasure which is not desired by

them to whom nature has given the means of obtaining it. Nevertheless, in her present situation, Corinna shunned every thing which seemed in contrast with those habits of domestic life, so dear to Lord Nelvil.

Corinna was wrong in respect to her own happiness, to attach herself to a man who must have contradicted her natural existence, and repressed rather than excited her talents; but it is easy to comprehend how a female, who is much occupied with literature and the fine arts, can love in a man, qualities and even tastes, which are different from her own. We are so often wearied with ourselves, that we cannot be seduced by that which resembles us; there must be harmony in sentiments, and opposition in characters, before sympathy and diversity can all at once generate. Lord Nelvil possessed this double charm in the highest degree. There was an habitual charm in

his life, in the sweetness and facility of his conversation, and yet what was irritable and gloomy in his soul, never permitted him to set himself off by the grace and complacency of his manners. Although the depth and extent of his ideas rendered him fit for every thing, his political opinions, and his military skill, inspired him with more inclination for the career of arms, than for that of letters ; he thought that actions were always more poetical than even poetry itself. He shewed himself superior to the success of his genius, and spoke of himself in this respect with great indifference. Corinna in order to please him, endeavoured to imitate him in this respect, and by and by disdained her own literary success, in order that she might the more resemble the modest and retired females, of which the country of Oswald presented the model.

The homage however which Corinna received at Venice, inspired Lord Nelvil with an agreeable impression only. There

was so much benevolence in the reception given them by the Venetians ; they expressed with so much grace and vivacity, the pleasure they experienced in the conversation of Corinna, that Oswald felt sincerely the enjoyment of being beloved by a woman whose charms were so seductive, and so generally admired. He was no longer jealous of the glory of Corinna, certain that she preferred him to every one else, and his love seemed to be still increased by what he heard said of her. He forgot even England ; he acquired some of that carelessness about the future, peculiar to the Italians. Corinna saw this change, and her heart imprudently rejoiced at it, as if it would last for ever.

The Italian is the only language in Europe, the different dialects of which have a distinct and separate genius. We may make verses, and write books in each of these dialects, which are more or less different from classical Italian ; but among the different languages of the various

states of Italy, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian, and the Venetian dialects alone, have the honour to be regarded as elegant; and the Venetian passes for the most original and most graceful of the whole. Corinna pronounced it with a charming softness, and the manner in which she sang some *barcaroles*, in the gay style, proved that she could perform in comedy as well as in tragedy. She was much teased to take a part in á comic-opera, which was to be acted in private the following week. Corinna, since she first loved Oswald, had never made him acquainted with her talents in this way; she had never felt a sufficiency of freedom of mind for this amusement, and sometimes even she thought that such a deprivation of gaiety might produce disease; but for this once, from a singular confidence, she consented. Oswald pressed her to it in an urgent manner, and it was agreed that she should play the *Fille de l'air*, for this was the name of the piece that had been chosen.

This piece, like the most of those of Gozzi, was composed of extravagant fairy scenes, very original and very gay (7). Truffaldin and Pantaloon, frequently appear in these burlesque dramas, by the side of the greatest kings in the world. The marvellous serves for pleasantry; but the comic is supplied by this marvellous also, which must never have any thing vulgar or low in it. *La Fille de L'air*, or *Semiramis in her Youth*, is a coquet sent by heaven and hell to subjugate the world. Reared in a cave like a savage, active as an enchantress, imperious as a queen, she unites natural vivacity with premeditated gracefulness, the courage of the warrior with the frivolity of a woman, and the passion for folly. This character requires a sally of imagination and of gaiety, which the inspiration of the moment alone can give. All the company joined in requesting Corinna to take it upon her.

CHAPTER II.

DESTINY sometimes plays a cruel and wicked game; we may say that it is a power which seeks to inspire fear, and repels a confident familiarity; frequently when we give ourselves up the most to hope, and particularly when we have the appearance of sporting with chance, something remarkable passes in the issue of our history, and the fatal sisters come forward to mix their black threads in it, and to confound the work of our hands.

It was upon the 17th of November that Corinna awoke, quite enchanted with the idea of performing in the evening. She chose, in order to appear in the first act as a savage, a very picturesque garb. Her [hair, which ought to have been

dishevelled, was arranged, however, with a care that shewed a lively desire to please, and her elegant dress, light and fantastic, gave her noble figure a character of coquetry and malice singularly graceful. She arrived in the palace when the comedy was to be performed. A great company was assembled. Oswald alone had not yet arrived. Corinna kept back the entertainment as long as she could, and began to be uneasy at his absence. At last, when she came upon the stage, she saw him in a very obscure corner of the hall; and the pain which the expectation of seeing him had excited, redoubling her joy, she was as much inspired with gaiety and enthusiasm, as if she really had been in the capitol.

The singing and the dialogue were intermixed, and the piece was so contrived, that it was permitted to embellish the dialogue by extempore effusions; this gave Corinna a great advantage, and rendered

the scene more animated. When she sung, she made her audience feel the spirit of the *Buffa* Italian airs with a peculiar elegance. Her gestures, accompanied by the music, were at once comic and noble ; she excited laughter without ceasing to be imposing, and her character and talents ruled the actors and spectators, gracefully smiling at both.

Ah ! who is there that would not have lamented this exhibition, if he had known that the happiness in which she seemed so confident, had attached the thunder, and that this gaiety so triumphant, would soon give place to the bitterest grief.

The applause of the spectators was so great, and so correctly bestowed, that their pleasure communicated itself to Corinna ; she felt that sort of emotion which causes amusement when it gives a lively sentiment of existence, when it inspires a forgetfulness of destiny, and disengages for a moment the mind from every tie as well as

from every gloom. Oswald had seen Corinna display the utmost grief, at a time when he flattered himself with making her happy: he saw her, moreover, express an unmixed joy, when he received a piece of intelligence very fatal to both. Several times he thought of weaning Corinna from this rash gaiety; but he felt sad pleasure when he still saw for a few moments, the brilliant expression of happiness upon her amiable countenance.

At the end of the piece Corinna made her appearance, elegantly attired as an Amazon Queen; she commanded the men, nay, almost the elements, by that confidence in her charms which a fine woman possesses, who is not endowed with good sense. But this coquette sovereign, this crowned fairy, whom Corinna represented, mingling as she did, in a most wonderful manner, anger with pleasantry, carelessness with a desire to please, and gracefulness with despotism, seemed

to reign over fate as well as over the hearts of her audience, and when she mounted the throne, she smiled with a mild arrogance to her subjects, on commanding their submission. All the spectators rose in order to applaud Corinna as the true queen. This moment was perhaps, of her whole life, the most distant from fear of sorrow; but all at once she saw Oswald, who, unable to contain himself, concealed his head with his hands, in order to give vent to his tears. She instantly became agitated, and the curtain had scarcely dropped, when, descending from this unfortunate throne, she hastened to the adjoining chamber.

Oswald followed her, and when she saw his paleness, on a closer inspection, she was seized with such affright, that she was obliged to rest against the wall to support herself; trembling, she said to him, "Oswald! O my God! what is the matter?" "I must set out for England

to night ;” he answered, without knowing what he did ; otherwise he would not have exposed his unfortunate friend by communicating this intelligence so abruptly. She advanced towards him, in a state next to madness, and exclaimed : “ No, you cannot surely be the cause of so much misery to me ! What have I done to deserve it ? Will you take me with you, then ? ” — “ Let us quit immediately this unfeeling crowd,” answered Oswald, “ come along with me, Corinna ! ” — She followed him, without understanding what he said, answering wildly and by chance what came uppermost, and already so altered in her countenance, that every one thought her seized with some sudden illness.

CHAPTER III.

AS soon as they were seated together in the gondola, Corinna, in her distraction, addressed Lord Nelvil: "Alas! what you have told me is a thousand times more cruel than death. Be generous, throw me into these waves, in order that I may lose that sensibility which distracts me; Oswald, do it with courage, it requires less of that quality to do so than you have already shewn." "If you say one word more" said Oswald, "I will precipitate myself into the canal before your eyes. Listen to me, wait till we have got home before you decide upon my destiny and your own. In the name of Heaven, be calm." There was so much sorrow in Oswald's accent, that Corinna was silent, but she trembled so violently, that she could scarce mount the stairs leading to

her apartment. When she arrived, she tore off her dress with terror. Lord Nelvil, on seeing in this state her who had been so lively and so gay some minutes before, threw himself into a chair overwhelmed with tears, and exclaimed: "Am I a barbarian, Corinna?"—"No," said she, "I can never think so. Do you not still possess that regard which every day gave me happiness? Oswald, you whose presence was as a ray from heaven to me, can it be that I fear you, that I dare not lift my eyes upon you, that I stand before you as if I were before an assassin—Oswald, Oswald!" On finishing these words she fell in a suppliant posture at his feet.

"What do I see?" exclaimed he, raising her with fury, "you wish that I should dishonour myself; well, I shall do so; my regiment is to embark in a month, I have just received the intelligence; I shall remain, but remember—I shall remain if you shew me that grief, that sorrow which

has so much power over me ; but I will not survive my shame.”—“ I do not ask you to remain,” replied Corinna, “ but what harm can be done by my following you ? ” “ My regiment is ordered to the Islands, and no officer is allowed to take his wife with him.” “ Let me accompany you the length of England at least—” “ The same letters I have received,” replied Oswald, “ inform me that the report of our connection has been spread in England, that the public papers have spoken of it, that they begin to suspect who you are, and that your family, stirred up by Lady Edgermond, will never acknowledge you. Give me time to bring them back to you, to force your mother-in-law to do you justice ; but if I arrive along with you, if I am constrained to leave you before having restored your name to you, I shall give you up to all the severity of opinion, without being there to defend you.” “ So you peremptorily refuse me every thing,” said Corinna, and on uttering these words she fell down senseless,

and her head striking the floor with violence, the blood gushed from it. Oswald at this spectacle sent forth the most piercing cries. Theresina came up in great distress, and she recalled her mistress to life. But when Corinna returned to her senses, she perceived in the looking-glass her pale and distracted visage, her hair dishevelled and clotted with blood. "Oswald," said she, "Oswald, it was not so when you met me at the capitol; I bore on my forehead the crown of hope and of glory, which now is covered with blood and dust; but you are not entitled to despise me for this situation in which you have placed me. Others may, but you cannot do it; you must pity the love with which you have inspired me, it must be so."

"Stop!" said Lord Nelvil, "this is too much." Making a sign to Theresina to leave them, he took Corinna in his arms and said to her, "I am determined to remain; do with me what you will; I sub-

mit to the destiny of Heaven, but I shall not abandon you in this distress, and I shall not conduct you to England, before having insured your happiness there. I shall not leave you exposed to the insults of a haughty woman. I remain, yes I remain, because I cannot leave you." These words recalled Corinna to her senses, but threw her into a state of mind much more cruel than the despair she experienced. She felt the necessity which weighed her down, and with her head lowered, she continued a long time in profound silence. "Speak to me, my dear," said Oswald to her, "let me hear the sound of your voice; nothing else can comfort me. I wish to be guided by it." "No," answered Corinna, "no, you shall go, it must be so." Torrents of tears announced her resignation. "My friend," cried Lord Nelvil, "I take to witness this picture of your father which is there before our eyes. You know how sacred the name of father is to me! I take it to wit-

ness that my life is at your disposal, as far as it is necessary for your happiness. Upon my return from the Islands, I shall see if I can restore you to your country, and enable you to recover the rank and existence which are your due ; but if I do not succeed, I shall return to Italy and live and die at your feet.” “ Alas ! ” replied Corinna, “ but these dangers of war which you must brave—” “ Do not fear them,” said Oswald, “ I shall escape them all ; but if I perish, however, my memory will remain in your heart : you shall, perhaps, never hear my name pronounced without your eyes being filled with tears ; is it not true, Corinna ? you will say, ‘ *I knew him, he loved me !* ’ ” “ Ah ! leave me, leave me,” she cried, “ you deceive yourself with my apparent calmness ; to-morrow when the sun returns, I shall say, ‘ *I shall never see him more, I shall never see him more !* ’ it may happen that I may cease to live, and that will be very fortunate ! ” — “ Why,” cried

Lord Nelvil, "why Corinna are you afraid that you shall not see me again? Do you disbelieve the solemn promise of our meeting again? can your heart doubt it?" "No, I respect you too much not to see you," said Corinna, "it will cost me much more to renounce my admiration of you than my love. I regard you as an angelic being, as the purest and noblest character that has ever appeared upon the earth; it is not merely your charms which captivate me, it is the idea that so many virtues were never united in the same object, and your heavenly countenance expresses the whole: far be it from me therefore to doubt your promises. I shall fly from the sight of a human being; it shall in future inspire me with terror only if Lord Nelvil can be deceitful: but separation gives me up to so many dangers; that terrible word adieu!" "Never," interrupting her, "never can Oswald bid Corinna a last adieu, except upon a death-bed"—and his emotion was so great on pronouncing these words,

that Corinna, beginning to dread the effect of this emotion upon his health, strove to contain herself, although she had the most to complain of.

They began therefore to speak of the cruel separation, of the means of communication, and of the certainty of meeting each other again. A year was fixed as the term of absence. Oswald thought himself sure that the expedition would not last longer; in short, they continued together some hours longer, and Corinna hoped that she would recover herself. But when Oswald told her that the gondola would come to take him away at three o'clock in the morning, and that she saw by her watch that this hour was not far off, she trembled in every limb, and the approach to the scaffold could not have inspired her with more affright. Oswald also seemed to lose his resolution at every moment, and Corinna, who had always seen him master of himself, had her heart

distracted by the spectacle of his anguish. Poor Corinna ! she consoled him, while she must have been a thousand times more miserable than he was.

“ Listen,” said she to Lord Nelvil, “ when you are in London, the silly men of that great city will tell you, that promises of love are not binding upon honor ; that all the English in the world have loved Italians while on their travels, and have forgotten them on their return ; that a few months of happiness neither bind them who experience it, nor those that are the cause of it, and that at your age, your whole subsequent life must not be devoted to the charms which you have experienced for some time in the company of a foreigner. They have the air of reason—that reason which the world admires : but you who have known this heart of which you have made yourself master ; you who know so well how much it loves you, will you ever find sophisms enough to heal a

mortal wound? and will the frivolous and barbarous pleasantries of the men of the day, prevent your hand from trembling when it plunges a dagger into my bosom?" "Ah! what do you say?" exclaimed Lord Nelvil, "it is not your grief alone which withholds me, it is my own; where shall I find a happiness similar to that I have enjoyed in your company? who in all the universe will hear me as you have heard me? Love, Corinna, love, it is you alone who experience it, and you alone who inspire it: that harmony of soul, that intimate intelligence of mind and heart, with what other woman can it exist except with you? Corinna, your friend is not a frivolous man, you know it, and have had occasion to feel it: every thing in life has been serious to him; will it be towards you alone then that he will change his nature?"

"No, no," replied Corinna, "no, you will never treat with disdain a sincere soul.

Oswald it is not you that to my despair I shall find insensible. But an invincible enemy threatens me near your person; it is the despotic severity and the disdainful mediocrity of my mother-in-law. She will say every thing to you that can tarnish my past life; spare me from anticipating her merciless discourse; far from the talents I possess being an excuse in her eyes, I know they will be the greatest of my crimes. She does not understand their charms, she only sees their danger. She finds useless, and perhaps culpable, all that does not agree with the destiny that has been traced out for herself, and all the sensibility of the heart seems to her to be an unfortunate caprice, which arrogates to itself the right of despising her reason. It is in the name of the virtues I respect as much as you do, that she will condemn my character and my fate. Oswald, she will tell you that I am unworthy of you.” “And how shall I hear it?” said Oswald; “what virtues will they dare

to raise higher than thy generosity, thy frankness, thy goodness and thy tenderness? Heavenly creature! let common women be judged by common rules! But shame be to him whom you have loved if he does not respect you as much as he adores you! Nothing in the universe equals your mind or your heart. At the divine fountain whence thy sentiments flow, all is love and truth. Corinna, Corinna, ah! I cannot leave you. I feel my courage fail. If you do not support me I shall never go; and it is from yourself I must receive the power of afflicting you!"—"Well," said Corinna, "yet a few moments before recommending my soul to God, that he may give me strength to bear the hour strike which is fixed for your departure. We love each other, Oswald, with a profound tenderness. I have entrusted you with the secrets of my life: these are nothing but facts, but the inmost sentiments of my soul, you know them all. I have no idea that is not in unison with

yours. If I write a few lines where my soul expands ; 'tis you alone who inspire them ; 'tis to you I address all my thoughts ; and my last sigh shall be breathed for you. Where then will be my asylum if you abandon me ? The fine arts retrace your image to me ; music is your voice ; heaven is your countenance. All that genius, which once inflamed my thoughts, is nothing else than love. Enthusiasm, reflection, intelligence, I have nothing except in common with you !

“ Almighty God ! who hearest me,” said she, raising her eyes to heaven, “ God ! who art not deaf to the pangs of the heart, the most noble of all ! take my life from me when he ceases to love me ; take from me the miserable remains of my existence, which will only contribute longer to my sufferings. He takes away with him all that I possess of generosity and tenderness ; if he allows the fire deposited in his bosom to be ex-

tinguished, let my life also be extinguished wherever I am. Great God ! thou hast not destined me to survive all the nobler sentiments ; and how can he remain to me, when I shall have ceased to esteem him ? I feel at the bottom of my heart an affection which commands his. Oh my God !” she exclaimed once more, “ death or his love !” On ending this prayer she turned towards Oswald and found him prostrate before her in dreadful convulsions ; the excess of his emotion had surpassed his strength ; he rejected the assistance of Corinna ; he wished to die, and his brain seemed absolutely turned. Corinna gently locked his hands in hers, repeating to him all he had said to herself. She assured him that she believed him ; that she trusted to his return, and that she felt much calmer : this gentle language tranquillized Lord Nelvil, yet the nearer the hour of separation approached, the more impossible it was for him to decide.

“Why,” said he to Corinna, “why should we not go to the temple before my departure, to pronounce the oath of an eternal union?” Corinna started at these words, looked at Lord Nelvil, and the greatest distress agitated her heart; she remembered that Oswald, in relating his history to her, had said that a woman’s sorrow was very powerful upon his conduct; but he had added, that this sentiment was chilled by the very sacrifices that sorrow obtained from him. All the firmness, all the liveliness of Corinna was awakened by this idea, and after a few moments silence, she answered: “it is necessary that you should have seen your friends and your country once more before adopting the resolution of marrying me. I owe it at this moment, my Lord, to the emotions occasioned by your departure. I do not wish that it should be so. Oswald did not insist further: “At least,” said he, seizing the hand of Corinna, “I swear once more, that my faith is sealed

by that ring I have given you. While you preserve it never shall another have any right over my fate ; if you once disdain it ; if you return it to me"—“ Cease, cease,” replied Corinna, “ to express an inquietude which you can never experience. Ah ! it is not I who shall break the first consecrated union of our hearts, you know well that it is not I, and I shall blush almost in assuring you of what is but too certain.”

The hour, however, approached ; Corinna became pale at every noise, and Lord Nelvil remained plunged in profound sorrow, nor had he strength to utter a single word. At length the fatal light appeared at a distance through the window, and soon afterwards the black gondola stopped before the door. Corinna at this sight screamed with terror and fell into the arms of Oswald, exclaiming : “ There they are ! there they are !—adieu !—go—it is all over.” “ Oh my God !” said Lord Nel-

vil, "do you request it of me!" and clasping her in his arms, he overwhelmed her with his tears. "Go," said she, "go—it must be so." "Call Theresina," answered Oswald, "I cannot leave you thus alone." "Alone, alas!" said Corinna, "shall I not be so until you return?" "I cannot leave this room," said Lord Nelvil, "no I cannot"—and on pronouncing these words, such was his despair, that by his looks and his wishes he called upon death. "Well," said Corinna, "I shall give the signal;—I shall go myself and open that door, but grant me a few moments." "Yes! yes!" said Lord Nelvil, "let us remain together; let us remain; 'tis better to endure these cruel struggles, than to cease to behold you."

The boatmen were now heard under the windows calling upon Lord Nelvil's servants; they answered, and one of them knocked at Corinna's door, and told his

master *that all was ready*. “Yes, all is ready,” answered Corinna, and leaving Oswald she knelt down to pray, with her head resting upon the portrait of her father. Without doubt at this moment her past life presented itself entirely before her; her conscience exaggerated all her faults; she trembled lest she did not deserve the divine mercy, and yet she felt herself so miserable, that she thought she might trust to the mercy of Heaven. At length she rose and gave her hand to Lord Nelvil—“Go,” said she, “I wish it at present, and in a moment, perhaps, I shall be of a different opinion: go—God bless your steps, and may he protect me also; for I have much need of his favour.” Oswald once more precipitated himself into her arms, and pressing her to his heart with inexpressible passion, trembling and pale, like a criminal going to punishment, he left that chamber where, for the last time, perhaps, he had loved, he had felt himself beloved, in such a man-

ner, that the universe does not present us with a second example of it.

When Oswald disappeared from Corinna's view, a dreadful palpitation which deprived her of the power of breathing, seized her ; her eyes were so dim that the objects she saw lost all reality in her ideas, and seemed to be now nearer, and now at a distance from her sight ; she thought the apartment in which she was shook as in an earthquake, and she leant against the wall in order to support this fancied motion. For a quarter of an hour she still heard the noise made by Oswald's servants in preparing for his departure : he was then in the gondola ; she might have seen him once more ; but she was afraid of herself ; and as for him, he was lying in the gondola almost motionless. At last they set out, and at this moment Corinna darted from her chamber to recall him, but Theresina stopped her. A terrible shower of rain began to fall, a most vio-

lent gale of wind was heard, and the house in which Corinna lived was shaken like a ship in the midst of the ocean. She felt a lively inquietude for Oswald traversing through the Lagunes in such boisterous weather, and she descended to the banks of the canal with a design of embarking and following him at least to Terra Firma; but the night was so dark that there was not a single boat to be had. Corinna trod in cruel agitation the narrow stones which separate the canal from the houses. The storm meantime increased, and her alarms for Oswald's safety increased at every step. She called by chance upon the boatmen, who mistook her cries for those of distress coming from some unhappy person who was drowning during the tempest, yet no one dared approach her, so frightful were the waves which rolled on the banks of the great canal.

Corinna waited till day in this situation. The tempest then ceased, and the gondo-

lier who had conducted Oswald brought her the intelligence, that they had passed the Lagunes in safety. For a moment she was happy, and it was some hours before the unfortunate Corinna felt again that absence, these tedious hours, and that devouring inquietude and pain which lone were to occupy her in future.

CHAPTER IV.

OSWALD, during the first days of his voyage; was nearly twenty times for returning to his Corinna; but there were motives which led him away and triumphed over his desire. To have conquered love once is a great step towards his total defeat: the delusion of his empire is then at an end.

On approaching England all the recollections of his country recurred to the soul of Oswald; the year he had passed in Italy had no connection with any other epoch in his life. It was like a brilliant apparition which had struck his imagination, but had not been able entirely to obliterate the opinions nor the tastes of which his existence had been hitherto

composed. He was himself again ; and although the regret of being separated from Corinna hindered him from experiencing any impression of good fortune, he nevertheless resumed a kind of fixity in his ideas, which the vague intoxication of the fine arts and of Italy had caused to disappear. As soon as he set foot in England, he was struck with the regularity and freedom, the riches and industry which were presented to his view ; the inclinations, habits and tastes, which he had imbibed, were renewed with more force than ever. In this country, where the men have so much dignity, and the women so much modesty, where domestic happiness is the bond of public tranquillity, Oswald only thought of Italy in order to complain of it. It seemed to him, that in his own country, human reason was nobly imprinted on all around him, while in Italy the institutions and the state of society only recalled to his mind, in many respects, confusion, weakness,

and ignorance. The seducing pictures, the poetical impressions of Italy gave way to the profounder sentiments of liberty and morality; and much as he cherished the memory of Corinna, he blamed her gently for being wearied with living in a country abounding with every thing noble and wise. In short, if he had passed from a country where the imagination is idolized, into an insipid and frivolous one, all his recollections, his whole soul would have keenly recalled him to Italy; but he exchanged the indefinite desire of a romantic happiness for the pride of the true blessings of life, independence, and security. He entered upon that state of existence which is most agreeable to man; action, with an object in view. Reverie is rather the lot of females, of these beings feeble and resigned from their birth: man pants after what he ought to obtain, and the habit of courage, the sentiments of strength, enable him to contend with fate

and to rise above it, if he cannot bend it to his will.

Oswald, upon arriving in London, met once more the friends of his childhood. He heard them speak that energetic and terse language which seems to imply much more sentiment than it expresses; he saw once more those serious physiognomies which are developed all at once when deep rooted affections triumph over their habitual reserve; he recovered the pleasure of making discoveries in the heart, which are gradually revealed to the penetration of an observer of mankind; in short, he found himself in the bosom of his country, and those who never left it are ignorant of the multiplicity of ties which endear it to us. Yet Oswald never separated the memory of Corinna from any impressions he received, and as he was more than ever attached to England, and felt himself little disposed to quit it

again ; all his reflexions led him to the resolution of espousing Corinna and settling in Scotland along with her. He was impatient to embark, in order that he might return the sooner, when an order arrived to suspend the sailing of the expedition, of which his regiment formed a part ; but they announced to him, at the same time, that from one day to another this delay might cease, and such was the uncertainty, in this respect, that no officer could dispose of himself for fifteen days. This situation rendered Lord Nelvil extremely unhappy. He felt severely his absence from Corinna ; and his having neither the time nor the permission granted him necessary for forming or pursuing any stable plan. He spent six weeks in London, without going into the world, alone occupied in thinking of Corinna, and passing heavily the time he was obliged to lose at a distance from her. At length he resolved to employ these days of anxiety by paying a visit to Nor-

thumberland, in order to see Lady Edgermond, and to induce her authentically to recognise that Corinna was the daughter of Lord Edgermond, and that the report of her death was false ; his friends had shewn him the public papers where insinuations had been published very unfavourable to the idea of Corinna's existence, and he felt an ardent desire to restore her to that rank and consideration which were her due.

CHAPTER V.



OSWALD set out for Lady Edgermond's estate. He reflected with emotion that he was about to visit that place where Corinna had passed so many years. He also felt some embarrassment from the necessity of making Lady Edgermond understand that he was resolved to renounce her daughter ; and the mixture of these various sentiments agitated him, and threw him into reveries. The places he saw in proceeding towards the north of England, recalled to him Scotland more and more ; and the recollection of his father incessantly present to his memory, penetrated still deeper into his heart. When he arrived at Lady Edgermond's, he was struck with the fine taste displayed in the arrangements of the garden and the castle ; and as the mistress

of the house was not as yet ready to receive him, he walked into the park, and perceived, at a distance, through the leaves, a young person of a most elegant shape, with flaxen hair of admirable beauty, which was but loosely confined by her hat. She was reading with much attention. Oswald recognized her to be Lucilia, although he had not seen her for three years; although she had passed in this interval, from infancy to youth, she was astonishingly improved. He approached her, and after saluting her, forgetting that he was in England, he wished to take her hand in order to kiss it respectfully, according to the custom of Italy; the young lady recoiled two paces, blushed, and making a deep curtsey, thus addressed him: "Sir, I shall apprise my mother that you are here." She then disappeared. Lord Nelvil stood astonished at her imposing and modest air, and her truly angelic figure.

Lucilia had scarcely entered her sixteenth year. Her expression was remarkable for delicacy : her shape was almost too slender, for a little weakness might be remarked in her walking ; her skin was of admirable beauty ; the white and red roses vied successively with each other, in her countenance. Her blue eyes were so often hung down, that her physiognomy chiefly consisted in that delicateness of cast which betrayed, unknown to her, the emotions concealed in every other respect by her profound reserve. Oswald, since he travelled in the south of Europe, had lost the idea of such a figure — of such an expression. He was seized with a sentiment of respect, he keenly reproached himself with having accosted her with a kind of familiarity, and regaining the castle, when he saw that Lucilia had entered it, he was struck with the celestial purity of a youthful female who had never been absent from her mother, and had felt no other sentiment in her life than that of filial tenderness.

Lady Edgermond was alone when she received Lord Nelvil: he had seen her twice with his father some years before, but he had then paid very little attention to her; he regarded her this time with penetration, in order to compare her with the portrait Corinna had drawn of her; he found it correct in many respects; but nevertheless it appeared to him that there was in the looks of Lady Edgermond more sensibility than Corinna ascribed to her, and he thought she did not possess so strongly as he did, the habit of divining reserved physiognomies. His first object with Lady Edgermond, was to induce her to acknowledge Corinna, by cancelling all she had contrived to spread about her death. He began the discourse by speaking of Italy, and of the pleasures he had enjoyed there. "It is a pleasing residence for a man," said Lady Edgermond: "but I should be vexed if any female in whom I took an interest should be happy there for any length of time." "And yet,"

answered Lord Nelvil, already galled by this insinuation, "I found in Italy the most distinguished women I ever knew in my life." "That may be in respect to wit," replied Lady Edgermond, "but a gentleman seeks other qualities than this in the companion of his life." "And he finds them also," said Oswald warmly. He was proceeding when Lucilia entered, and approached her mother's ear in order to whisper to her. "No, my dear," answered Lady Edgermond aloud, "you cannot go to enquire for your cousin to-day. You must dine at home here with Lord Nelvil." Lucilia, at these words, blushed more deeply still than in the garden, then sitting down by her mother, she took from the table a piece of embroidery, with which she busied herself without ever lifting up her eyes, or mingling in the conversation.

Lord Nelvil was almost impatient of this conduct; for it was probable that

Lucilia was not ignorant that their union had been talked of, and although the ravishing figure of Lucilia struck him, always the more, he recollected all that Corinna had told him of the severe education Lady Edgermond bestowed upon her daughter. In England in general, the young girls have more liberty than married women, and reason as well as morality sanctions the custom; but Lady Edgermond thought differently, she was of opinion that in all situations, the most rigorous reserve was most proper for women, whether married or single. Lord Nelvil wished to declare to Lady Edgermond his intentions with respect to Corinna, as soon as he found himself once more alone with her ladyship; but Lucilia did not go away, and Lady Edgermond kept up until dinner time the conversation upon various subjects, with a manner so firm, and yet so simple, that it inspired Lord Nelvil with respect. He would have combatted opinions so dogmatic on

every subject, which were often at variance with his own ; but he felt that if he said a word to Lady Edgermond which was not in unison with her own ideas, he might give her an opinion of him which nothing could efface, and he hesitated at this first step, completely irreparable with a person who admitted of no shades or exceptions, and judged every thing by general and positive rules.

Dinner was announced. Lucilia approached her mother, in order to give her her arm. Oswald observed that Lady Edgermond walked with great difficulty. " I have a disease upon me, which is very painful, and it will, perhaps, prove mortal." Lucilia became pale at these words. Lady Edgermond remarked it, and mildly resumed : " My daughter's care has already saved my life once, however, and she will perhaps live to save me for a long time yet." Lucilia held down her head that her tenderness might not be vi-

sible. When she raised it again, her eyes were still moist with tears, but she did not yet dare to take her mother's hand; every thing passed in the bottom of her heart, and she did not think of others, except to conceal from them what she felt. Oswald, however, was deeply moved by this reserve and constraint, and his imagination, but lately moved by eloquence and passion only, was now pleased in contemplating the picture of innocence, and he thought he saw around Lucilia a certain modest air, which deliciously tranquillized his looks.

During dinner, Lucilia, wishing to spare her mother the most trifling fatigue, served every thing with a continual care, and Lord Nelvil heard the sound of her voice only when she offered him the different viands; but these insignificant words were pronounced with an enchanting sweetness, and Lord Nelvil asked himself how it was possible that the most

simple motions, and the most common expressions could so thrill through the soul. It requires, he repeated to himself, either the genius of Corinna, who excels all that the imagination can desire, or else those mysterious veils of silence and of modesty, which permit every one to suppose the existence of the virtues and sentiments he wishes. Lady Edgermond and her daughter rose from the table, and Lord Nelvil would have followed them, but Lady Edgermond was so scrupulously faithful to the custom of going out at the desert, that she told him to remain at the table, until she and her daughter had prepared tea in the parlour, and Lord Nelvil rejoined them a quarter of an hour afterwards. The evening passed without his being a single moment alone with Lady Edgermond, for Lucilia never quitted them. He did not know what to do, and he was about to proceed to the next village, in order to return next day, when Lady Edgermond invited him to pass

the night in her house. He accepted the offer as a matter of course, without attaching any importance to it, and yet he repented having consented, because he thought he could remark in the looks of Lady Edgermond, that she considered this consent as a reason for thinking he still thought of her daughter. 'This was an additional motive for inducing him to request a conversation, which he intended should take place next morning.

Lady Edgermond desired that she might be conducted to the garden. Oswald offered to assist her. Lady Edgermond looked at him stedfastly, and then said: "I thank you." Lucilia gave up to him her mother's arm, and whispered to him in a low voice, afraid of being overheard by her mother, "My Lord, walk gently." Lord Nelyil started at these words spoken so secretly. It was thus that a sensible expression was first addressed to him by that angelic creature,

who did not seem formed for the affections of this lower world. Oswald did not think that his emotion at this moment was an offence to Corinna; it appeared to him to be merely an homage to the celestial purity of Lucilia. They returned at the hour which Lady Edgermond had appointed for reading prayers among her domestics every evening. These were assembled in the great hall. The most of them were infirm and old, they had served Lady Edgermond's father and also her husband. Oswald was touched with this spectacle, which brought to his recollection what he often seen in his paternal mansion. Every one knelt except Lady Edgermond, who was prevented by her illness, but she joined her hands and shut her eyes with fervent devotion.

Lucilia was on her knees beside her mother, and it was she who read prayers. She first read a chapter from the Evangelists, and then a prayer adapted for a rural

and domestic life. It was composed by Lady Edgermond, and there was in the expressions a kind of severity, which contrasted with the gentle and timid tone of her daughter's voice as she read it; but this severity even increased the effect of the last words which Lucilia tremblingly pronounced. After having prayed for the domestics of the family, for their relatives, the King, and their country, she concluded: "Grant, we beseech thee, O God, that the young lady of this house may live and die without her soul being tainted by a single thought or sentiment which is not conformable to her duties, and that her mother, who is about to return to thee, may obtain pardon for her own sins in the name of the virtues of her only child."

Lucilia repeated this prayer every day, but on this occasion, on account of Oswald's presence, she was more touched than ever, and tears flowed from her eyes.

before she had finished the reading of it, while, by covering her face with her hands, she endeavoured to conceal her tears from the view of the spectators. But Oswald had seen them flow, and a tenderness, mixed with respect, filled his heart: he contemplated that air of youth which bordered upon infancy, and that look which seemed still to preserve the recent recollection of Heaven. A countenance so charming in the midst of those around, which were furrowed by the hand of age or disease, seemed to be the image of divine mercy. Lord Nelvil reflected upon the austere and retired life which Lucilia had led, possessed of beauty without a rival, and thus deprived of all the pleasures as well as homage of the world, and his soul was penetrated with the purest emotion. The mother of Lucilia deserved respect also, and obtained it. She was one who was even still more severe towards herself than towards others. The limits of her mind ought rather to have been attributed to

the extreme rigor of her principles, than to any defect of natural intelligence; and in the midst of all the ties she had imposed upon herself, of all her stiffness, natural or acquired, there was an affection for her daughter so much the more profound, as the severity of her character proceeded from a repressed sensibility, and gave a new face to the only affection she had not conquered.

At ten o'clock at night the profoundest silence reigned throughout the mansion. Oswald could reflect at his ease upon the day that had passed. He did not confess to himself that Lucilia had made an impression upon his heart. Perhaps it was not the case yet; but although Corinna enchanted the imagination in a thousand ways; there was nevertheless a sort of ideas, a musical sound, if we may be allowed the expression, to be found only with Lucilia. The images of domestic happiness accorded more easily with this retreat in Nor-

thumberland, than with Corinna's triumphal car : in short, Oswald could not dissemble that Lucilia was the woman his father had chosen for him : but he loved Corinna, and he was beloved in his turn ; he had sworn never to form other attachments ; this was enough to make him persist in the resolution of declaring next day to Lady Edgermond that he wished to marry Corinna. He fell asleep thinking of Italy ; and nevertheless, during his sleep, he thought he saw Lucilia pass before him in the semblance of an angel ; he awoke, and wished to banish the idea, but the same dream returned, and the last time this figure presented itself before him, it seemed to fly away ; he awoke again, regretting for the first time that he was not able to retain the image which had disappeared. The day began to break, and Oswald descended to take a walk.

CHAPTER VI.

THE sun rose and Lord Nelvil thought that no one was yet up belonging to the house. He was however mistaken; Lucilia was drawing in the balcony. Her hair which she had not yet tied together, was blown about by the wind. She therefore resembled Lord Nelvil's dream, and at first view he was startled as if he had seen a supernatural apparition. But he was soon ashamed of being alarmed at so simple a circumstance. He remained some time before this balcony; he saluted Lucilia, but she could not see him, as her eyes were intent upon her drawing. He continued his walk, and he then wished more than ever to see Corinna that she might dissipate these vague impressions which could not be explained. Lucilia

pleased him like something mysterious or unknown ; he could have wished that the splendour of Corinna's genius might dispel this slight image which successively assumed various forms in his eyes.

He returned to the parlour and he there found Lucilia, who placed the design she was busy with in a small brown box lying on her mother's tea-table. Oswald saw this design ; it was only a white rose upon its stalk, but it was painted with the utmost gracefulness. " You know how to paint then ? " said Oswald to Lucilia. " No, my lord, I can only imitate flowers, and these only when they are the simplest of all the rest : there is no master here, and the little I have learnt I owe to a sister who gave me some lessons." On pronouncing these words she sighed. Lord Nelvil blushed much, and asked her what had become of this sister ? " She is not alive," replied Lucilia, " but I shall never cease to regret her." Oswald understood

that Lucilia was deceived, like the rest of the world, as to the fate of her sister : but this expression, *I shall never cease to regret her*, revealed to him an amiable trait, and he was affected. Lucilia would have retired, finding herself alone with Lord Nelvil, when Lady Edgermond entered. She regarded her daughter with astonishment and severity, and made a sign to her to retire. This look apprized Oswald of what he had not before been aware of, that Lucilia had done something extraordinary, according to the established customs of Lady Edgermond, in remaining some minutes with him without her mother; and he felt it, as he would have done a very striking mark of attachment coming from any other than Lucilia.

Lady Edgermond sat down, and sent away the servants who had supported her to her chair. She was very pale, and her lips quivered while offering a dish of tea to Lord Nelvil. He observed this agita-

tion, and his own embarrassment increased from it; animated however with the desire of doing a service to her he loved, he began the conversation. "Madam," said he to Lady Edgermond, "I have seen a lady in Italy very often who interests you much." "I do not believe it," said Lady Edgermond drily, "for there is no one who interests me in that country." "I imagined, however," continued Lord Nelvil, "that the daughter of your husband had some claims to your affection." "If the daughter of my husband," replied Lady Edgermond, "was a person indifferent to her duties as to her reputation, I certainly should not wish her any ill, but I should be happy never to hear her mentioned." "And if this daughter, abandoned by you, madam," resumed Oswald, "was the most justly celebrated woman in the world in point of talents of every kind, would you despise her always?" "Certainly," replied Lady Edgermond. "I make no allowance for talents which turn

a female from the path of duty. There are actresses, musicians, and artists, in abundance to amuse the world, but for women of our rank, their most proper duties consist in devoting themselves to their husbands and to the right education of their children." "What!" replied Lord Nelvil, "those talents which come from the soul, and cannot exist without the most elevated character, without the most feeling heart; those talents which are united with the most melting goodness, the most generous heart; do you blame them because they extend the thoughts, because they give to virtue even a more extensive empire, and a more general influence?" "To virtue?" replied Lady Edgermond with a sarcastic smile, "I do not know what you mean by the word as thus applied; the virtue of a person who has fled from her paternal mansion, the virtue of a person who has settled in Italy, leading a most independent life, receiving every homage, to say nothing more, giv-

ing an example still more pernicious to others than to herself, renouncing her rank, her family, and the name of her father.” “Madam,” said Oswald interrupting her, “it is a generous sacrifice she has made to your desires and to your daughter; she was afraid of doing you an injury by keeping your name.” “She was afraid then,” exclaimed Lady Edgermond, “she felt that she had dishonored it.” “This is too much,” said Oswald violently, “Corinna Edgermond will soon be Lady Nelvil; and we shall then see, madam, if you blush to acknowledge in her the daughter of your husband. You confound with the vulgar a person endowed like no other woman, an angel in mind and in goodness, an admirable genius, and, nevertheless, a timid and sensible character, a sublime imagination, an unbounded generosity, a person who may have had faults, because so astonishing a superiority does not always agree with common life, but one who possesses so fine a soul that she is above her

faults, and even one of her actions alone is sufficient to blot them out. She honors him whom she has chosen for her protector, more than a queen of the world could do in calling him her husband." "My Lord, you may, perhaps," answered Lady Edgermond, making an effort to stifle her anger, "accuse the confined notions of my mind, but there is nothing in what you have told me, that at all concerns me. I understand nothing from the word morality but the exact observation of established rules; beyond those I do not understand such qualities as are ill-employed, and which deserve only pity at most." "The world would have been very steril, madam," answered Oswald, "if we had never known genius nor enthusiasm, and if human nature had been made a thing so precise and monotonous—but without continuing an useless discussion any longer, I formally ask you if you will acknowledge Miss Edgermond as your step-daughter when she shall be Lady Nelvil?" "So

much the less on that account," replied Lady Edgermond, "for I owe it to the memory of your father, to prevent, if I can, that most improper union." "How, my father?" said Oswald, for the mention of his father always agitated him. "Are you ignorant," continued Lady Edgermond, "that he refused the hand of Miss Edgermond for you, when she had as yet committed no fault, when he only foresaw with that perfect sagacity which characterized him, what would one day happen?"—"What! you know."—"Your father's letter to Lord Edgermond on this subject is in the hands of Mr. Dickson his old friend," said Lady Edgermond, interrupting him, "I transmitted it to him when I was informed of your intercourse with Corinna in Italy, in order that he might read it to you on your return; it was not fit that I should do so myself to you."

Oswald was silent for a few moments;

he then resumed, "What I ask of you is only what is just, and what you owe to yourself: destroy the reports you have circulated as to the death of your step-daughter, and acknowledge her honourably for what she really is, the daughter of Lord Edgermond." "I do not wish to contribute in any way to the unhappiness of your life," replied Lady Edgermond, "and if the actual existence of Corinna, that existence, without name and without dependence, can be the cause that you do not espouse her, may God and your father preserve me from removing this obstacle." "Madam!" answered Lord Nelvil, "the misfortunes of Corinna will be an additional tie between her and me." "Very well!" replied Lady Edgermond, with a vivacity in which she never indulged, and which certainly proceeded from the regret she felt on losing, as a husband for her daughter, a man who suited her in so many respects: "well!" continued she, "make yourselves both

miserable; for she will be so also; this country is hateful to her; she cannot bend herself to our manners, and to our severe life; there must be a theatre for her on which to display all those talents you prize so much, and which render her life so valuable; you will soon see her become weary of this country, and desirous of returning to Italy; she will carry you with her; you will quit your friends, your own country, and the country of your father, for an amiable stranger, I grant, but who will forget you, if you wish it, for there is nothing more fickle than one of these exalted heads. The profound sorrows are only made for what you call the middling class of women, that is to say, those who live only for their husbands and children." The violent agitation into which this conversation had thrown Lady Edgermond, who never, perhaps, even once in her life, allowed herself to be carried to this pitch, shook her already diseased nerves, and on ceasing to speak she

found herself very ill. Oswald seeing her in this state rung for assistance.

Lucilia came in much terrified to attend her mother, and threw a single disturbed glance at Oswald, which seemed to say : “ *and is it you who have made my mother ill ?*” This look touched Lord Nelvil deeply. When Lady Edgermond revived, he endeavoured to shew how much interest he felt for her ; but she coldly repulsed him, and blushed to think that from her emotion she had perhaps failed in respect to her daughter, and betrayed the desire she entertained that Lord Nelvil should be her husband. She made a sign to Lucilia to retire, and said, “ my Lord, you must at all times consider yourself as free from any engagement that may exist between us. My daughter is so young that she cannot have attached herself to the project your father and I had formed. But it is more prudent, however, since this project is changed, that

you should not again visit my house while my daughter continues unmarried." "I shall confine myself, then," replied Oswald, bowing to her, "to writing to you, in order to entreat you in behalf of a person I shall never abandon." "You are master of your own actions," answered Lady Edgermond, stifling her voice, and Lord Nelvil departed.

In passing through the avenue on horseback, he perceived at a distance in the wood the elegant figure of Lucilia. He slackened the pace of his horse in order to see her once more, and it seemed to him as if Lucilia followed the same direction as himself, concealing herself behind the trees. The high road lay in front of a pavilion at the extremity of the park. Oswald remarked that Lucilia entered this pavilion: he passed it with emotion, but without being able to discover her: he turned his head round several times, after passing it: he remarked in another spot,

from which the whole road might be seen, a slight rustling among the leaves of a tree near the pavilion: he halted opposite the tree, but he did not any longer perceive the slightest motion; uncertain whether he had guessed rightly, he proceeded; then all at once he retraced his steps with the rapidity of lightning, as if he had dropped something upon the road: he saw Lucilia by the side of the road, and saluted her respectfully: Lucilia drew down her veil and hid herself in the wood, without reflecting that to conceal herself in this manner was to avow the motive that had brought her there: the poor girl had never experienced any thing so forcible, nor so culpable in her life, as the sentiment which made her desirous of seeing Lord Nelvil pass; and, far from thinking of saluting him, she thought herself for ever ruined in his esteem. Oswald understood all these movements, and thought himself gently flattered by that innocent interest so timidly and so

sincerely expressed. No one, he thought, could be more true than Corinna ; but no one also knew herself and others better : Lucilia was yet to be taught the love she might feel, and the love she might inspire ; but could this charm of a day continue throughout life ? And since this amiable ignorance of herself could not last long, since, in short, her soul must be penetrated in order to know what passed in it, the integrity which succeeded this discovery, was it not still better than the integrity which preceded it ?

He thus compared Corinna and Lucilia in his reflections ; but this comparison was still, he thought, a simple amusement of his mind ; he never supposed it would occupy his attention again.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER having left Lady Edgermond's, Oswald proceeded to Scotland. The agitation which Lucilia had caused, and the sentiments he cherished towards Corinna, all gave way to the emotions he felt at the sight of places where he had spent his life with his father : he reproached himself with the distraction to which he had given himself up for a year past ; he was afraid he was no longer worthy to enter the dwelling which he wished he had never quited. Alas ! after the loss of those whom we most dearly loved in this world, how can we be content with ourselves if we do not continue in the most profound solitude ! It is sufficient to live in society in order to neglect, as it were, the worship of those who are

no more. It is in vain that their remembrance is sealed at the bottom of the heart. We bind ourselves to that vivacity of the living which extinguishes the idea of death, either as painful, as useless, or merely as fatiguing. In short, if solitude does not prolong our regrets and our reveries, existence, such as it is, seizes anew upon the most tender souls, and gives them once more interest, passion, and desires. It is a miserable condition of human nature thus to distract ourselves, and, far from Providence having wished that mankind should do so in order to support death, both with respect to himself and others ; often, in the midst of these distractions, we are seized with the remorse of a guilty conscience, and a still and forcible voice tells us: *have you forgotten me, you whom I never forgot ?*

These sentiments occupied Oswald on his return to his native country : he did not now experience the same despair

he felt on the first visit, but a profound sentiment of sadness: he saw that time had accustomed every one to the loss of him whom he lamented: the domestics did not think they ought to pronounce the name of his father any more before him: each had returned to his habitual occupation: a generation of children had grown up to replace their fathers. Oswald shut himself up in his father's apartment, where he found his cloak, his cane, and arm chair, all in the same place; but where was that voice which answered his own, and where was the heart of a father which would have palpitated at his son's return! Lord Nelvil continued plunged in profound reveries. "O human destiny," he exclaimed, with his countenance bathed in tears, "what do you wish us to do!—No, he hears me, my only friend is here present and sees my tears, and our immortal souls wait for each other. Oh my father! oh my God! guide me through life. They seem to know neither any ex-

quisite sensation, nor grief, nor repentance, these obdurate souls, which seem to possess in themselves the immoveable qualities of physical nature ; but the beings composed of imagination, sensibility, and conscience ; may they not make one step without going astray ! they seek duty for their guide, and duty itself is deaf to their prayers, if the divinity has not written it upon their hearts."

In the evening Oswald walked in his father's favourite alley ; he pursued his image through the trees. Alas ! who is there who has not sometimes wished, in the fervency of his prayers, that a beloved shade should re-appear ; that a miracle should take place to gratify his love ! vain hope ! on this side of the tomb we know nothing. Uncertainty of uncertainties, you do not occupy the vulgar ; but the more the mind is ennobled, then is it invincibly attracted towards the depths of reflection. While Oswald was

thus wrapt up within himself, he heard a carriage in the avenue, and an old man alighted from it, who advanced slowly towards him: an old man at that time, and in that place, confounded him. He recognized Mr. Dickson, the old friend of his father, and received him with an emotion which he had never before experienced towards him.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DICKSON resembled Oswald's father in no respect whatever: he had neither his mind nor his character; but at the moment of his death he was with him; and having been born in the same year, it might be said, that he remained behind him a few days, only to carry him the news of this world. Oswald lent him his arm to help him up the steps; he felt a charm in thus assisting age, the only resemblance to his father he could find in Mr. Dickson. This old man had seen Oswald born, and did not hesitate to speak to him, without constraint, of every thing that concerned him. He blamed strongly his connection with Corinna; but his feeble arguments would have had much less ascendancy over Oswald's mind

than those of Lady Edgermond, if Mr. Dickson had not handed to him the letter which his father, Lord Nelvil, wrote to Lord Edgermond, when he wished to break off the projected marriage between his son and Corinna, then Miss Edgermond. The following is the letter written in 1791, during the first journey of Oswald in France. He read it trembling.

Letter from Oswald's Father to Lord Edgermond.

“ WILL you pardon me, my friend, if I propose to you a change in the projected union between our two families : my son is eighteen months younger than your eldest daughter ; he would suit your second daughter Lucilia better, who is twelve years younger than her sister. I might assign this motive alone ; but as I knew the age of Miss Edgermond when I asked her hand for Oswald, I thought I should be wanting in friendship if I did

not detail the reasons which induce me to wish that this marriage should not take place. We have been acquainted together for twenty years ; we may talk of our children with freedom, the more so, as they are still young enough to be influenced by our advice. Your daughter is a charming girl ; but I think I see in her one of those beautiful Greeks who enchanted and subjugated the world. Do not be offended with the idea this comparison may suggest. Without doubt your daughter has received from you, and has only found in her own heart, the purest sentiments and principles ; but she must captivate, she must please, in order to shine. She has much more genius than self-love ; but talents so rare must necessarily excite the desire of displaying them ; and I do not know what theatre would be sufficient for that activity of mind, that impetuosity of imagination, in short, that ardent character which is displayed throughout all her language ; they will

naturally draw my son out of England ; for such a woman cannot be happy there ; and Italy alone will be agreeable to her.

“ She will require that independent kind of existence which is only controuled by fantasy. Our country life, our domestic habits, are necessarily contradictory to all these tastes. A man born in our happy country should be an Englishman before every thing else : he ought to fulfil his obligations as a citizen, since he has the happiness to be one ; and in countries where political institutions give men honourable occasions of acting and displaying themselves, the women should remain in the shade. How do you think that a person so distinguished as your daughter is should be content with such a station ? Believe me, marry her in Italy ; her religion, her tastes, and her talents, call her there. If my son married Miss Edgermond, he would certainly love her much, because it is impossible to be more se-

ducing ; and he would then try, in order to please her, to introduce foreign customs into his house : he would soon lose that national spirit, those prejudices, if you please, which unite us among ourselves, and form of our nation a body, an association free but indissoluble, which cannot perish but with the last of us. My son would soon become ill at ease in England when he saw his wife was not happy in it. I know he has all the weakness which gives sensibility ; he will therefore settle in Italy, and this expatriation, if I am alive to see it, will kill me with grief. It is not only because she would deprive me of my son, but because she would deprive him of the honour of serving his country.

“ What a change for an inhabitant of our mountains, to lead an indolent life in the midst of the pleasures of Italy ! A Scotchman to be the *cicisbeo* of his own wife, if not the *cicisbeo* of some one’s else ! Useless to his family, of which he is neither

the guide nor the support ! From what I know of Oswald, your daughter will acquire a great command over him. I am therefore happy that his present stay in France prevents all opportunity of his seeing Miss Edgermond ; and I venture to beseech you, my friend, if I die before the marriage of my son, not to make him acquainted with your eldest daughter until your youngest is of an age to fix his attention. I think our acquaintance together is old, and sacred enough to expect this work of affection from you. Tell my son, if you please, my wishes on this subject ; I am sure he will respect them, especially if I am no more.

“ Contribute all in your power, I beseech you, to the union of Oswald with Lucilia ; although she is yet an infant, I have remarked in her character, in the expression of her physiognomy, and in the sound of her voice, the most affecting modesty : she is the woman, truly Eng-

lish, who can make my son happy; if I do not live long enough to witness this union, I shall rejoice at it in heaven; when we shall meet there, one day, my dear friend, our blessings and our prayers will still protect our children.

Yours, &c.

NELVIL."

After reading this letter Oswald maintained the most profound silence, which gave time to Mr. Dickson to continue his long discourse without interruption. He admired the sagacity of his friend, who had judged so correctly of Miss Edgermond, although he was far, he said, from being able to imagine the culpable line of conduct she had pursued since he wrote that letter. He pronounced, in the name of the father of Oswald, that such a marriage would be a mortal insult to his memory. Oswald learnt from him, that during his fatal stay in Rome, a year after this letter was written, in 1792, his father

had found no consolation except with Lady Edgermond, where he had passed a whole summer, and that he was occupied with the education of Lucilia, which pleased him much. In short, without art, but also without much delicacy, Mr. Dickson attacked the heart of Oswald where it was most vulnerable.

It was thus that every thing contributed to destroy the happiness of the absent Corinna, who had no defence except her letters, which recalled her to Oswald's memory from time to time. She had to combat the nature of things, the influence of his native country, the remembrance of his father, and the entreaties of his friends in favour of resolutions easily taken ; she had also to combat the rising charms of a young girl, who seemed so much in harmony as Lucilia was, with the pure and calm blessings of domestic life.

BOOK XVII.

CHAP. I.

CORINNA IN SCOTLAND.

CORINNA during all this time was settled in a villa upon the banks of the Brenta; she wished to remain on the spot where she had seen Oswald for the last time; and besides, she was nearer to England than at Rome, so that her letters came sooner. The Prince Castel-Forte had written to her, offering to visit her, and she refused him. The friendship which subsisted between them commanded confidence; and if he had attempted to detach her from Oswald, if he had said to her what he often said to himself, that absence ought to cool affection and senti-

ment; such an expression inconsiderately uttered would have been like a stroke of a dagger to Corinna: she therefore preferred seeing no one. But then nothing is more difficult than to live alone, when the soul is ardent, and the situation unhappy. All the occupations of solicitude require a calmness in the mind, and when it is agitated by inquietude, a forced distraction, however perplexing it may be, is much more acceptable than a continuity of the same impression. If we could divine by what gradations we arrive at folly, it is surely when a single thought takes hold of the mind, and does not admit of a succession of objects, in order to vary the ideas. Corinna was besides a person of so lively an imagination, that it consumed itself when its faculties had no external aliment.

What a different life succeeded to that which she had led for nearly a year! Oswald was beside her almost all day

whelmed him with reproaches. He justified himself, and his letters now became less tender; for in place of expressing his own inquietude, he was occupied in dissipating that of his friend.

This change did not escape the sad Corinna, who studied day and night every phrase, every word in Oswald's letters, and endeavoured to discover, by incessantly reading them, an answer to her fears, and a new interpretation which might give her some repose.

This state of mind hurt her nerves, and weakened the strength of her mind. She became superstitious, and was continually occupied with the presages that might be drawn from every event, when the mind is filled with one and the same fear. One day in the week she went to Venice, in order to obtain her letters on that day a little earlier. She varied by this means, the torments of expectation. In a few

weeks she had acquired a disgust for all the objects she saw on going and returning: and her distracted thoughts, presented the most horrid forms to her imagination.

Once upon entering the church of St. Mark, she recollected that upon arriving at Venice, the idea occurred to her that perhaps, before separating, Lord Nelvil would have conducted her there, and taken her for his wife, in the face of heaven; she then gave herself entirely up to this illusion. She saw him enter the porticos, approach the altar, and promise in the name of his God to love Corinna for ever. She thought she knelt before Oswald, and thus received the nuptial crown. The organ which was heard in the church, the torches which illuminated it, animated her vision, and for a moment she did not feel the cruel vacuity of absence, but only that melting tenderness which fills the soul, and causes to be heard at the bottom of the heart, the voice of those

we love. All at once a dismal murmur fixed the attention of Corinna, and as she returned she perceived a coffin brought into the church. At this sight she started, her eyes became wild, and from this moment she was was convinced in her mind that her affection for Oswald would be the cause of her death.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Oswald had perused his father's letter, as shewn him by Mr. Dickson, he was for a long time the most unhappy and irresolute of men. To distract the heart of Corinna, or to be wanting in respect to the memory of his father, was an alternative so cruel, that he invoked death a thousand times in order to escape it; at length he repeated once more what he had done so often, he recoiled at the moment of decision, and said to himself, that he would go to Italy in order to make Corinna herself the judge of his torments, and of the part he ought to take. He thought that his filial duties prevented him from marrying Corinna. He was so far free, that if he chose, he might never unite himself to Lucilia.

But in what manner could he pass his life with Corinna? Was he to sacrifice his country, or carry her to England, without caring for her reputation or her fate? In this melancholy perplexity, he would have set out for Venice, if, from month to month, a report had not been circulated that his regiment was about to embark, he would have set off in order to acquaint Corinna with what he had not yet come to the resolution of writing to her.

Nevertheless, the style of his letters was necessarily altered. He was anxious not to write what passed in his soul, ; but he could not express himself with the same freedom as before. He had resolved to conceal from Corinna the obstacles he had met with to the project of having her publicly acknowledged, because he still hoped to succeed, and did not wish to irritate her to no purpose against her step-mother ; various necessary conceal-

ments rendered his letters shorter than usual: he filled them with subjects foreign to the purpose; he said nothing of his future projects; in short, any one else than Corinna would have been certain as to what passed in Oswald's mind; but an impassioned sentiment renders us at once both more penetrating, and more credulous. It would seem that in this state we can see nothing except in a supernatural light. We discover what is hidden, and we deceive ourselves as to what is clear and palpable: for we revolt from the idea of suffering at that point where nothing extraordinary is the cause of it, and when such a despair is produced by very simple circumstances.

Oswald was extremely unhappy, both from his personal situation, and on account of the pain he had caused to her he loved; and his letters expressed irritation, without telling the cause of it. He reproached Corinna, from a singular mis-

conception, with the grief he felt, as if she had not a thousand times more reason to complain than he had; in short, he completely harrowed up the soul of his friend. She was no longer mistress of herself: her mind was troubled, her nights were haunted by the most dismal images, which succeeding days did not dissipate, and the unfortunate Corinna could not believe that this Oswald, who wrote such harsh, severe, and confused letters, was he whom she once knew to be all generosity and tenderness: she felt an irresistible desire to see him. "Let me hear him say with his own lips," she would exclaim, "that it is he who now distracts me, while formerly the smallest pain would have afflicted his heart so deeply; let him tell me so, and I shall submit to my destiny. But some infernal power inspires such conduct. It is not Oswald —no it is not Oswald who writes to me. They have calumniated me to him; in

short, there must be some perfidy where there is so much misfortune.

One day Corinna formed the resolution of going to Scotland, if we can call by the name of resolution that impetuous grief which compels us to change our situation at any price; she durst not write to any one that she was to set off; she had not even as yet determined where she should communicate it to Theresina, and she flattered herself that, by the exercise of her own reason, she should be enabled to remain. She consoled her imagination alone by the project of a journey, by changing every morning the designs formed in the evening. She alleviated her grief in the prospect of the future. She was utterly incapable of any occupation. Reading became impossible to her, music only created a sorrowful sensation, and the scenery of nature also redoubled her pain. This person, once so active, now passed whole days in an

quired, gave her still too much interest for herself. It is only by detaching ourselves from every thing in this world, that we can renounce those whom we love ; all other sacrifices precede this, and life may be a long time a desert before the fire that has laid it waste is extinguished.

At last, in the midst of doubts and perplexities, which successively overturned and renewed Corinna's plans, she received a letter from Oswald, informing her that his regiment would embark in six weeks, and that he could not profit by this interval to visit Venice, because a colonel who left his regiment under such circumstances, would lose his reputation. There was only time enough for Corinna to arrive in England before Lord Nelvil left it, and perhaps for ever. This fear hastened her in deciding upon her departure. Corinna's precipitancy, may be lamented, because she was not ignorant how much inconsiderateness there was in her conduct : she judged herself more

severely than any one else did ; but what woman has the right to throw the *first stone* at that unfortunate female who does not justify her fault, who expects no enjoyment from it, but flies from one misfortune to another, as if frightful phantoms surrounded her on all sides.

The following is the conclusion of her letter to the Prince of Castel-Forte :
“ Adieu, my faithful protector, adieu, my friends at Rome, all you with whom I have passed many peaceful and happy days. All is over, destiny has smitten me : I feel its mortal wound within me : I may again enter on the contest, but I know I shall be conquered. I must see him again, believe me I am not answerable for myself ; there are storms within my bosom which will cannot govern ; and yet I am fast approaching that point at which all will be peace ; what is now passing is the last act of my history ; repentance and death will follow afterwards. Mysterious confusion of the

human heart! Even at this moment, when I am torn by a consuming passion, I hear a divine voice which thus addresses me: “*Unfortunate wretch! yet a few days more of agitation and of love, and I expect you in eternal rest!*” O my God! grant me a sight of Oswald once more for the last time! The remembrance of him is as it were obscured by my despair. And yet was there not something divine in his looks? did it not seem when he entered, as if a pure and brilliant air announced his approach? My friend, you have seen him place himself beside me, embarrass me by his cares, and protect me by the respect he inspired for his choice. Oh! how can I exist without him? Pardon my ingratitude. Ought I thus to acknowledge the constant and noble affection you have always evinced towards me? But I am no longer worthy of any thing, and I should pass as insane, if I had the melancholy faculty of observing my own folly. Adieu, then, adieu!”

CHAPTER V.

HOW miserable is that delicate and sensible female who commits a great imprudence ; who commits it for an object by whom she thinks herself less beloved, and having only herself to bear her up against what she has done. If she risked her reputation and her repose in order to do a great service to him she loves, she cannot be complained of. It is so sweet to devote ourselves ; there is in the soul so much delight when we brave all dangers in order to save a life that is dear to us, and in assuaging that grief which distracts a heart interwoven with ours ; but thus to traverse unknown countries alone and unattended ; to blush at first before him we love, even at the proof of love we have given

him; to risk every thing because it pleases ourselves, and not because another demands it, what a painful sentiment ! what a humiliation ! worthy, however, of pity, because all that truly love deserve it. What would become of us if we thus compromised the existence of others ? if we failed in our duties towards all our sacred ties ? But Corinna was free, she only sacrificed her glory and repose. There was no reason, no prudence in her conduct, but there was nothing that could injure any one else than herself, and her unhappy attachment ruined herself alone.

Upon landing in England, Corinna saw by the public papers that the departure of Lord Nelvil's regiment was still retarded. She saw nothing of London except in the society of the banker to whom she was recommended under a fictitious name. He interested himself in her behalf at first, and seemed disposed, as well as his wife and daughter, to do her all the services in

their power. She fell dangerously ill on her arrival, and for fifteen days her new friends watched over her with the utmost tenderness. She learnt that Lord Nelvil was in Scotland, but that he would return in a few days to London, where his regiment then was. She knew not how to inform him that she was in England. She had never written to him about her departure, and her embarrassment was so great in this respect, that for a whole month Oswald had received none of her letters. He began to be much alarmed; he accused her of levity and fickleness, as if he had a right to complain. Upon his arrival in London he went first to his banker, where he hoped to find some letters from Italy; he was told there were none. He walked out, and as he was reflecting upon this silence, he met Mr. Edgermond whom he had seen at Rome, and who asked him for news respecting Corinna. "I know nothing of her," said Lord Nelvil piqued. "Oh! I can well believe it," replied Mr.

Edgermond, "these Italian women always forget strangers as soon as they are out of sight. There are a thousand instances of this, and it is not worth afflicting ourselves about; they would be too amiable if they had constancy joined to so much fine imagination. It is as well that our English women should have some advantages." He then shook hands with Lord Nelvil and took leave of him, as he was returning into Wales, where he generally resided; but he had by these few words penetrated the heart of Oswald: "I am wrong," said he to himself, "I am wrong in thinking she ought to regret me, since I cannot devote myself to her happiness. But so quickly to forget him whom she once so loved, is to disregard the past at least as much as the future."

The instant Lord Nelvil was made acquainted with his father's pleasure, he resolved not to marry Corinna, and also formed the design never to see Lucilia

again. He was displeased with the too strong impression she had made upon him; and promised himself, that being condemned to act thus towards his mistress, he ought at least to maintain that fidelity of heart towards her, which no duty should ever force him to sacrifice. He contented himself with writing to Lady Edgermond in order to renew his solicitations to her on the subject of Corinna, but she constantly refused to give him any answer on this head; and Lord Nelvil understood from his conversations with Mr. Dickson, the friend of Lady Edgermond, that the only method by which he could obtain from her what he desired, would be to marry her daughter: because she thought that Corinna might spoil the marriage of her sister if she resumed her true name, and if her family recognised her. Corinna did not as yet dream of the interest with which Lucilia had inspired Lord Nelvil. Fate had as yet spared her this vexation. Never, however, had she been more wor-

thy of Lord Nelvil than at the very moment when fate separated her from him. She had, during her illness, among simple and honest merchants with whom she lived, acquired a predilection for English customs, and English manners: the small number of persons she saw in the family around her were distinguished in no remarkable manner, but they possessed a remarkable strength of reason and correctness of ideas; they evinced an affection for her less expanded than that to which she had been accustomed, but which was displayed at every opportunity by new services; the severity of Lady Edgermond, the ennui of a small provincial town had made a cruel deception upon her as to every thing that was noble and good in the country she had renounced, and she thus attached herself to it at a time when, for her own happiness at least, it was no longer desirable, perhaps, that she should experience such a sentiment.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE evening the family who heaped upon Corinna every mark of friendship and affection, pressed her strongly to see Mrs. Siddons play the part of Isabella in the Fatal Marriage, one of the pieces of the English stage in which this actress displays the most exquisite talents. Corinna refused for a long time; but recollecting that Lord Nelvil had often compared her manner of declaiming with that of Mrs. Siddons, she became anxious to hear her, and she went to the theatre veiled, where she took her station in a small box, from which she could see every thing without being observed. She did not know that Lord Nelvil had arrived in London; but she dreaded being seen by any Englishman who might have known

her in Italy. The noble figure and the deep sensibility of the actress, captivated the attention of Corinna so much, that during the first act her eyes were never turned from the stage. English declamation is fitter than any other for stirring up the soul, when a fine genius can make its power and its originality be felt. There is less art and less affectation than in France; the impression it produces is more immediate; true despair would express itself in such a manner; both the nature of the pieces and the kind of versification, placing the dramatic art at less distance from real life, the effect it produces is more distressing. It requires so much the more genius to be a great actor in France, because very little liberty is allowed in that country for an individual or original genius; general rules being so much adhered to. (8) But in England an actor may venture any thing, if Nature inspires him. These lengthened groans, which appear ridiculous when they are

related or described, startle us when we hear them. The most noble actress of her time, Mrs. Siddons, loses nothing of her dignity when she throws herself prostrate on the ground. There is nothing that may not be admirable, when an innate emotion accompanies it, an emotion which comes from the centre of the soul, and governs those who feel much more even than those who are witnesses of it. There is among different nations a different manner of playing tragedy; but the expression of grief extends from one end of the world to the other, and from the savage to the King there is something similar in all men, when they are truly miserable.

In the interval between the fourth and fifth acts, Corinna remarked that all eyes were turned to one box, and in that she saw Lady Edgermond and her daughter; she did not doubt that it was Lucilia, although she was singularly improved within these seven years. The death of a very

rich relation of Lord Edgermond's had obliged Lady Edgermond to come to London to settle the affairs of his succession. Lucilia was more adorned than ladies usually are at the play, and for a long time no person had been seen so remarkably dressed. Corinna was grievously surprised to see her; she thought it was impossible Oswald could resist the seduction of such a figure. She compared herself in her own mind with Lucilia, and she found herself infinitely inferior; she exaggerated to herself, if it was possible to exaggerate, the charms of Lucilia's youth, her snowy skin, her flaxen hair, and that innocent image of the spring of life. She felt herself unable to contend against these graces lavished by Nature herself, even with the talents, the genius, and with the natural or acquired endowments she herself possessed.

Suddenly she perceived, in the opposite box, Lord Nelvil, whose looks were fixed

upon Lucilia. What a moment for Corinna ! She saw once more for the first time that countenance which she sought after every instant in her remembrance, from which it was never yet effaced ; she saw him once more, and it was when Lucilia alone occupied the soul of Oswald. He certainly never could suspect that Corinna was present, but if his eyes had been by chance directed towards her, she might have drawn from them some presages of good fortune. At last Mrs. Siddons again appeared. Lord Nelvil turned his face towards the stage. Corinna then breathed more freely, and she flattered herself that a simple motive of curiosity had attracted Oswald's attention to Lucilia. The piece became at every sentence more and more interesting, and Lucilia was bathed in tears, which she attempted to conceal by retiring to the farther end of the box. Oswald then regarded her again with still more interest than at first. At last that dreadful moment arrived when

Isabella, having escaped from the hands of the women who wished to hinder her from killing herself, smiles at the fruitlessness of their efforts, in plunging a poinard into her heart. This smile of despair is the most difficult and most remarkable effort the dramatic genius can produce; it strikes us much more forcibly than tears: that bitter irony of sorrow is its most agonizing expression. How dreadful must be the sufferings of the heart when they inspire such a barbarous joy, when it yields at the sight of its own blood, the ferocious satisfaction of a savage enemy when he gluts his revenge!

Lucilia was now so much affected that her mother became alarmed: Oswald rose up as if he would have gone towards her, but he soon afterwards sat down again. Corinna felt a kind of joy at this second movement, but she said with a sigh; "Lucilia, my sister, who was once so dear to me, is young and sensible; ought I to tear

from her a blessing which she may enjoy without any obstacle, without the object of her love making any sacrifice to her?" The piece concluded, and Corinna wished to see every one quit the house before she stirred, fearful of being recognised, and she stationed herself behind a small aperture in the door of her box, whence she could perceive all that passed in the lobby. At the moment when Lucilia came out, a crowd assembled to gaze at her, and exclamations on her ravishing figure burst forth from all quarters. Lucilia became more and more agitated. Lady Edgermond, infirm and sickly, had some difficulty in making her way through the crowd, in spite of the care of her daughter and the respect that was paid them; but they were acquainted with no person there, and consequently no gentleman dared to accost them. Lord Nelvil, seeing their embarrassment, hastened towards them. He offered one arm to Lady Edgermond and the other to Lucilia, who took it timidly,

lowering her head and blushing excessively. They passed before Corinna in this manner: Oswald did not imagine that his poor friend was witness of a scene so dismal to her, and he indulged a small degree of pride in thus conducting the most beautiful woman in England through the numerous admirers who followed her steps.

CHAPTER V.

CORINNA returned home dreadfully agitated, ignorant what resolution to take, or how to acquaint Lord Nelvil with her arrival, and what motives to assign, for every moment she lost confidence in the sentiments of her friend, and she sometimes thought it was a stranger whom she had seen, a stranger whom she passionately loved, but who did not recollect her more. She sent to Lord Nelvil next evening, and she learnt he was at Lady Edgermond's: on the following day the same answer was brought her; but she was also informed that Lady Edgermond was ill, and that she would return to her estate as soon as she recovered. Corinna waited for this event before informing Lord Nelvil that she was in England; but every evening

she walked out, she passed before the house of Lady Edgermond, and she saw Oswald's chariot at her door. An inexpressible sensation oppressed her heart; and returning home she followed on the next day the same line of conduct, and experienced the same anguish. Corinna was wrong, however, in supposing that Oswald went to Lady Edgermond's with the view of marrying her daughter.

On the day they went to the theatre, Lady Edgermond had said to him, while he handed her into her carriage, that the succession of Lord Edgermond's relation, who died in India, concerned Corinna as much as it did Lucilia, and she requested him, in consequence, to call upon her in order to take charge of conveying to Italy the different arrangements she wished to make in that respect. Oswald promised to pay her a visit for this purpose, and he thought that the hand of Lucilia, which he held, trembled. Corinna's silence might

make him think he was not beloved, and the emotion of Lucilia may have given him an idea that she was interested at the bottom of her heart in his welfare. He had not the idea, however, of failing in the promise he had given Corinna, and the ring she possessed was a certain pledge that he could never marry another without her consent. He returned to Lady Edgermond on the following day, in order to take care of Corinna's interests; but Lady Edgermond was so ill, and her daughter so distressed to find herself thus alone in London, without any relative, and without knowing even to what physician to apply, that Oswald thought it a duty he owed to the friend of his father, to devote his whole time to her attendance.

Lady Edgermond, naturally haughty and severe, seemed to soften towards Oswald alone: she permitted him to visit her every day, without uttering a single word

that might give reason for supposing any intention of inducing him to marry her daughter. The name and the beauty of Lucilia might entitle her to make one of the most splendid alliances in England; and since she had appeared at the theatre, and was known in London, her door was besieged by the first noblemen in the country. Lady Edgermond constantly refused to receive any one; she never went out, and saw Lord Nelvil only. How was it possible for him not to be flattered by so delicate a conduct? This silent generosity which was shewn to him, without requiring any thing, without complaining of any thing, touched him deeply, and yet every time he went to see Lady Edgermond, he was fearful that his presence might be interpreted as the consequence of any attachment. He would have ceased to go, as soon as the interests of Corinna no longer attached him, if Lady Edgermond had recovered her health; but at the moment she was thought better she re-

lapsed more dangerously than at first ; and if she had died at this moment, Lucilia would have had no other assistance than Oswald's, since her mother never formed any acquaintances.

Lucilia never allowed a word to escape her that might give Lord Nelvil reason to think she preferred him ; but he might sometimes suspect it from a slight and sudden alteration in the colour of her cheeks, by her eyes sometimes falling hastily, and by a more rapid respiration ; in short, he studied the heart of this young girl with a prying and tender interest, and her complete reserve left him always in doubt and uncertainty as to the nature of her sentiments. The highest point of passion, and the eloquence it inspires, are not sufficient to satisfy the imagination ; we always desire something more, and not being able to obtain it, we become cool and wearied, while the feeble glimmering we perceive through the clouds keeps our

curiosity a long time in suspense, and seems to promise in perspective new sentiments and new discoveries. This expectation however is not gratified, and when we know, at last, what is concealed by all this charm of silence, and of what is unknown, the mystery thus vanishes, and we return from the delirium in order to regret the weakness of a warm imagination. Alas ! in what manner can we prolong this enchantment of the heart, those delights of the soul, which confidence and doubt, happiness and misery, equally dissipate at the last ! How foreign are these celestial enjoyments to our destiny ! They pass through our heart sometimes, merely to recall to us our origin and our hope.

Lady Edgermond having found herself better, fixed upon her departure for Scotland in two days. She wished to visit Lord Edgermond's estate, which lay next that of Lord Nelvil. She expected that he would propose to accompany her,

since he had given up his intention of returning to Scotland before his regiment embarked ; but he said nothing of it ; Lucilia looked at him at this moment, and yet she was silent ; she hastily ran and approached the window. A few minutes afterwards Lord Nelvil took some pretext of moving towards her, and he thought her eyes were bathed in tears : he was moved at the sight ; he sighed ; and the neglect of which he accused Corinna recurring to his memory, he asked himself if this young lady was not more capable than her of a faithful attachment.

Oswald endeavoured to make amends for the pain he had given Lucilia. We take so much pleasure in bringing joy back to a countenance which is still that of an infant ! Chagrin was not made for those physiognomies where even reflexion has not yet left any traces. Lord Nelvil's regiment was to be reviewed the next day in Hyde Park ; he therefore asked Lady

Edgermond if she would go to it in her carriage, with her daughter, and if she would permit him, after the review, to give Lucilia an airing on horseback beside her carriage. Lucilia had once said that she had a great desire to mount on horseback : she regarded her mother with an expression completely submissive, but in which might be remarked, at the same time, a desire of obtaining her consent. Lady Edgermond hesitated a few seconds, then stretching her feeble hand, which withered more and more every day, to Lord Nelvil, she said, “ if you request it, my Lord, I consent.” These words had such an impression upon Oswald, that he would have renounced what he himself had proposed ; but suddenly Lucilia, with a sprightliness she had not before shewn, took her mother’s hand and kissed it by way of thanking her. Lord Nelvil had not now the courage to deprive of an amusement that innocent creature who led a life so solitary and so dull.

Corinna endured the most galling anxiety for fifteen days: every morning she hesitated about writing to Lord Nelvil to inform him where she was, and every evening passed in the inexpressible vexation of knowing he was with Lucilia: what she suffered at night made her more timid on the morrow. She was ashamed to tell him, who perhaps no longer loved her, of the inconsiderate step she had taken on his account. "Perhaps," she would often say, "all the recollections of Italy are effaced from his memory!—Perhaps he has no longer any desire to find a superior mind and an impassioned heart among women! What pleases him at present is the admirable beauty of sixteen, the angelic expression of that age, the timid and new-fangled soul which dedicates to the object of its choice the first sentiments it has ever experienced."

The imagination of Corinna was so filled with the advantages of her sister, that she

was almost afraid to enter the lists against such charms. In her opinion, even talent itself was a deception, genius a tyranny, and passion a violence, beside this unarmed innocent; altho' Corinna had not yet attained her twenty-eighth year, she was already at that period of life, when women become extremely suspicious of their power of pleasing; in short, jealousy and proud timidity struggled in her soul; she put off from day to day the moment so much dreaded and so much desired, when she was to see Oswald again: she was informed that his regiment would be reviewed next day in Hyde Park, and she resolved to go there: she thought Lucilia would be there also, in which case she could judge of Oswald's sentiments with her own eyes. At first she formed the design of decorating her person with care, and thus suddenly shewing herself to him; but on sitting down to her toilet, her black hair, her colour a little sun-burned by the climate of Italy, her melancholy

air, inspired her with a distrust of her charms : she constantly saw in the looking-glass the heavenly countenance of her sister, and throwing away from her all the ornaments she had tried, she dressed herself in a black robe *à la Vénétienne*, disguising her face and shape under a cloak which is worn in that country, and then threw herself back into a carriage.

She had scarcely arrived in Hyde Park, when she saw Oswald appear at the head of his regiment. In his uniform, his figure was grand and imposing ; he managed his horse with the most perfect gracefulness and dexterity. There was something at once fierce and gentle in the sound of the music, as if it advised us to sacrifice our lives nobly. A multitude of men elegantly and simply dressed, and of beautiful and modest women, carried in their countenances, the former the stamp of the manly virtues, and the latter that of the timid. The soldiers in Oswald's re-

giment seemed to regard him with confidence and devotion. The music struck up the famous air of God save the King, which enters so deeply into the hearts of the English; and Corinna exclaimed: "Ah! respected country, which ought to have been mine, why did I quit it? Of what consequence is personal glory in the midst of so many virtues; and what glory would it be, oh Nelvil! to be your lawful wife."

The discharges of the fire-arms reminded Corinna of the dangers in which Oswald was about to share. She surveyed him a long time without his being able to perceive her, and she said to herself, with her eyes bathed in tears: "May he live, although not for me. Oh, my God! do thou protect him!" At this moment Lady Edgermond's carriage drove past; Lord Nelvil saluted her respectfully, bowing before her the point of his sword: her carriage passed and repassed several times: all those who saw Lucilia

admired her; Oswald looked at her in such a manner, that it pierced the heart of Corinna: she was acquainted with those looks; and there was a time when they had been often directed to herself.

The horses Lord Nelvil had provided for Lucilia, paraded the alleys of Hyde Park with the swiftness of lightning, while the carriage containing Corinna advanced slowly like a funeral car, behind the tumultuous noise of the rapid coursers. "Ah! it was not so," thought Corinna, "No, it was not in this manner I drove to the capitol where I first met him: he has precipitated me from my triumphal car into the abyss of sorrow! I love him, and all the joys of life have disappeared! I love him, and all the gifts of nature have faded away! Pardon me, my God, when I shall be no more." Oswald now passed the chariot in which Corinna was. The Italian shape of the black habit which enveloped her struck

him forcibly : he stopped, rode round the carriage, returned to look at it once more, and endeavoured to perceive who the female was who was thus concealed. Corinna's heart beat violently, she dreaded she should faint, and be thus discovered ; but she succeeded in resisting the emotion, and Lord Nelvil lost the idea which had first occupied him. When the review was ended, Corinna, that she might not any longer attract the attention of Oswald, alighted from her carriage while she was unobserved, and placed herself behind the crowd and the trees where she was not perceived. Oswald then approached Lady Edgermond's carriage, and shewing her a very quiet horse, which his servants had brought, he requested permission for Lucilia to mount it, by the side of her mother's carriage. Lady Edgermond consented, recommending to him to take care of her daughter. Lord Nelvil dismounted : he stood with his hat in his hand at Lady Edgermond's

coach door, with an expression so respectful, and at the same time so sensible, that Corinna could not but perceive too well an attachment for the mother, animated by the attraction inspired by the daughter.

Lucilia alighted from the carriage: she was dressed in a riding habit which displayed to advantage the elegance of her shape; she wore upon her head a black hat adorned with feathers, and her fine flaxen hair fell gracefully in ringlets down her charming countenance. Oswald lowered his hand so as to allow Lucilia to put her foot upon it in order to mount her horse. Lucilia expected that one of his servants would have performed this office, and she blushed on receiving it from Lord Nelvil: he insisted: Lucilia then placed her charming foot upon his hand, and mounted so quickly into the saddle, that all her movements presented the idea of one of those sylphs which the imagination has painted to us in so delicate colours; she set off at the gallop: Oswald

followed her, and never lost sight of her. At one time the horse made a false step; Lord Nevil instantly stopped, examined the bridle and the bit with an amiable anxiety: at another time he thought the horse had run off, he became pale as death, and pushing his own horse forward with an incredible speed, in a second he came up with Lucilia, alighted, and threw himself before her. Lucilia not being able any longer to restrain her horse, trembled in her turn, lest she should ride over Oswald; but with one hand he seized the reins; with the other he supported Lucilia, who leaped from her saddle and gently alighted.

What else was wanting to convince Corinna of the sentiments of Oswald for Lucilia? Was she blind to the marks of attachment he had shewn her? And also, to her eternal despair, had she not perceived in the looks of Lord Nelvil more timidity and more reserve than he had ever shewn at the time he made love to herself? Twice

she drew the ring from her finger; she was ready to force her way through the crowd in order to throw it at Oswald's feet; and the hope of dying in the act even encouraged her in this resolution. But where is that woman, born under a southern climate, who can, without shuddering, attract the attention of the multitude to her attachments? Corinna soon trembled at the idea of disclosing herself to Lord Nelvil at this instant, and she came out of the crowd in order to regain her carriage. As she crossed a solitary walk, Oswald saw once more at a distance the same black figure which had struck him before, and the impression she now made upon him was much more forcible. Yet he ascribed the emotion he felt to the remorse of having been this day, for the first time, unfaithful at the bottom of his heart, to the image of Corinna; and when he returned home, he instantly formed the resolution of setting out for Scotland, since his regiment was not to embark for some time.

CHAPTER VI.

CORINNA returned home in a state of sorrow which disturbed her reason, and from that moment her faculties were for ever weakened. She resolved to write to Lord Nelvil both of her arrival in England, and of all that she had suffered since she had been there. She began her letter with the most bitter reproaches, and then she tore it. "What do reproaches signify in love?" she exclaimed, "this sentiment would be the most sincere, the purest, and the most generous of sentiments, if it were not completely involuntary! what shall I do then with my complaints? The voice and the looks of another possess the secrets of his soul; and does not that explain all?" She began her letter again, and on this occasion she wished to describe to Lord

Nevil the monotony he would find in his union with Lucilia. She endeavoured to prove to him, that without a perfect harmony of the soul and the mind, no sentimental happiness could be lasting; and she again tore this letter more hastily than the first. "If he does not know my value," she said, "must it be I who am to teach him? And besides, should I speak in this manner of my sister? Is it true that she is inferior to me only in proportion as I endeavour to persuade myself of it? and if it were really the case, is it I, who, like a mother, have pressed her in her infancy to my heart, does it belong to me, I say, to tell her so? Ah! no, I must not thus procure my own happiness at the expence of another. This life, during which we have so many desires, passes away; and a long time before death even, something soft and heavenly detaches us by degrees from existence."

took up the pen once more, and

spoke of her own misery alone ; but in describing it, she felt such a pity for herself, that she covered the paper with her tears. “ No,” she said again, “ I must not send this letter ; if he withstands it I shall hate him ; if he yields I shall not know if he has made any sacrifice, if he does not retain the remembrance of another. It will be better to see him, to speak to him once more, to return him this ring, the pledge of his promises.” She then hastened to inclose it in a sheet of paper, and she wrote these words only, *you are free !* She put the letter in her bosom, and waited until the approach of night, in order to go to Oswald’s. She thought that in broad day she should blush before all those who should look at her, and yet she wished to anticipate the hour at which Lord Nelvil was wont to go to Lady Edgermond’s. At six o’clock, therefore, she set out, but trembling like a condemned slave. We trust those we love so very little when once they have lost our confi-

dence ! Alas ! the object of a sincere affection is, in our eyes, either a most faithful protector or much dreaded master !

Corinna made her carriage stop at Lord Nelvil's door, and she asked, with a trembling voice, of the servant who opened it, if his master was at home. “ *Within this half hour, madam,*” answered he, “ *my lord set out for Scotland.*” This intelligence froze the heart of Corinna : she trembled to see Oswald ; but yet her soul outstripped this inexpressible emotion. The effort was made, she thought she was within the sound of his voice, and she must now take a new resolution in order to see him, wait a few days longer, and condescend to one more imprudence. Nevertheless, at all events, Corinna was determined to see him, and next day she set off for Edinburgh.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE leaving London, Lord Nelvil returned to his banker, and when he found that no letter from Corinna had arrived, he asked himself with bitterness whether he should sacrifice his domestic happiness, which was certain and durable, to a person who perhaps never thought of him any more. Yet he resolved to write again to Italy, as he had already done several times for the last six weeks, in order to ask Corinna the cause of her silence, and in order to declare to her again, that if she never returned him the ring, he never would become the husband of another. He made his journey in a very disagreeable temper of mind; he loved Lucilia almost without knowing her, for he had not heard her

speak twenty words as yet; but he regretted Corinna, and fretted at the circumstances which separated them; by turns the timid charms of the one captivated him, and by turns he retraced the splendid gracefulness and the sublime eloquence of the other. If at this moment he had known that Corinna had loved him more than ever, that she had forsaken every one else to follow him, he never would have seen Lucilia again; but he thought himself forgotten; and reflecting upon the characters of Lucilia and Corinna, he said to himself, that a cold and reserved exterior often concealed the profoundest sentiments; he was deceived. Impassioned and ardent souls betray themselves in a thousand ways, and what is always reserved and kept concealed is very silly.

One circumstance added to the interest with which Lucilia inspired Lord Nelvil. On returning to his estate, he passed so

near to that of Lady Edgermond, that curiosity led him there. He opened the closet in which Lucilia was accustomed to work. This closet was filled with remembrances of the time that Oswald's father spent with Lucilia when his son was in France. She had raised a marble pedestal on the very spot where a few months before his death he had given her some lessons; and on this pedestal was engraved: "*To the memory of my second father.*" A book lay upon the table; Oswald opened it, and recognized a collection of thoughts written by his father, and upon the first page were these words written by his own hand. "*To her who has consoled me in my distresses, to the purest soul, to that angelic woman who forms the glory and happiness of her husband!* How great was Oswald's emotion upon reading those lines, which so forcibly expressed the opinion of him he so much revered! He was astonished at the silence of Lucilia towards him on the subject of the

marks of affection she had received from his father. He thought he discovered in this silence the most uncommon delicacy, the dread of forcing his affections by an idea of duty; in short he was struck with these words: "*To her who has consoled me in my distress!*" It is therefore Lucilia, he cried, it is she who has softened the grief I have occasioned my father, and shall I abandon her when her mother is dying; when she shall have no one else than me for her comforter! Ah! Corinna, you who are so courted and so admired, have you occasion like Lucilia for a faithful and devoted friend? But he was mistaken, she was no longer courted nor admired; this Corinna, now wandered alone from inn to inn, without having seen him for whom she had quitted every thing, and not having strength enough of mind to separate herself from him. She had fallen sick in a small town half way to Edinburgh, and had not been able, in spite of every exertion, to con-

tinue her rout. She often thought during the long nights of her sufferings, that if she died in this place, Theresina alone would know her name, and inscribe it on her tomb. What a change, what a fate for a woman who, while in Italy, could not take a single step without a crowd of admirers throwing themselves at her feet! And must a single sentiment thus blacken all her future prospects? At last, after eight days of inexpressible anguish, she resumed her sad journey; for although the hope of seeing Oswald was the object of it, there were so many painful sensations confounded with that ardent desire, that her heart felt more than one melancholy sensation. Before arriving at Lord Nelvil's residence, Corinna was desirous of stopping a few hours on her father's estate, which was not far off, and where Lord Edgermond had ordered her monument to be erected. She had not been there since, and she had only passed a single month on this

estate in company with her father. It was the happiest period of her stay in England. These recollections inspired her with the wish of revisiting this place, and she did not think that Lady Edgermond was to be there so soon.

A few miles from the castle, Corinna perceived a carriage overturned on the high road. She stopped her own, and saw come out of that which was broken, an old man, apparently much alarmed at his fall. Corinna hastened to his assistance, and offered to conduct him herself to the next village. He accepted her offer with gratitude, and informed her that his name was Dickson. Corinna recollected this name, which she had often heard Lord Nelvil mention. She directed the conversation so as to introduce the only subject which ever interested this old man in his life. Mr. Dickson was the most communicative man in the world, and not supposing that Corinna,

whose name he did not know, and whom he took for an Englishwoman, had any particular interest in the questions she put to him, he proceeded to tell her all he knew at full length ; and as he was anxious to please Corinna, whose attentions had touched him sensibly, he was indiscreet enough to gratify her.

He related how he had himself told Lord Nelvil that his father latterly opposed the marriage he had once wished to contract, and made an extract of the letter he had shewn him, repeating several times these words, which pierced the heart of Corinna : “ *His father has forbidden him to marry that Italian ; it would be an outrage upon his memory, as well as a defiance of his injunctions.*”

Mr. Dickson did not confine himself to these cruel words ; he added, that Oswald loved Lucilia, and that Lucilia loved him ; that Lady Edgermond vehemently

desired their marriage, but that an engagement formed in Italy, hindered Lord Nelvil from consenting. “What!” said Corinna to Mr. Dickson, endeavouring to conceal her agitation, “you think that it is merely on account of the engagement he has contracted that Lord Nelvil refuses to marry Lucilia?” “I am sure of it,” replied Mr. Dickson, charmed with being asked the question once more; “I saw Lord Nelvil three days ago, and although he did not explain to me the nature of the connection he had formed in Italy, he told me with his own lips what I communicated to Lady Edgermond: “*If I were free I should marry Lucilia!*” “*If he were free!*” repeated Corinna; and at this moment her carriage stopped at the door of an inn, into which she conducted Mr. Dickson. He thanked her, and asked her where he could again see her. Corinna did not hear him. She squeezed his hand, with-

out being able to answer him, and left him without saying a single word. It was late, yet she wished to visit the spot where the ashes of her father lay. The disorder of her mind rendered this sacred pilgrimage more necessary than ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY Edgermond had arrived at her estate two days before, and this very evening there was a grand ball at her house. All her neighbours, all her vassals, asked leave to allow them to join in celebrating her arrival. Lucilia also requested it, perhaps in the hope that Oswald would come also; in short, he was there when Corinna arrived. She saw plenty of carriages in the avenue, and made her own halt some steps from it; she alighted, and recognised the residence where her father had evinced the most tender sentiments towards her. What a difference between these times when she thought herself unhappy, and the present! It is thus that in life we are punished for our imaginary sorrows by real chagrin, which makes us

but too much acquainted with true misery.

Corinna inquired why the castle was illuminated, and who were the persons at that time there? By chance her servant asked the question of one of Lord Nelvil's domestics, and Corinna heard his answer. "It is a ball," said he, "which Lady Edgermond gives to-night, and Lord Nelvil, my master," he added, "opens the ball with Miss Edgermond, the heiress of this castle." On hearing these words Corinna trembled, but she did not alter her resolution. A strong curiosity induced her to approach places where so much misery awaited her; she made a sign to her servants to retire, and she entered the park alone, in which, from the darkness of the night, she might walk a long time without being perceived. It was ten o'clock, and, from the commencement of the ball, Oswald had danced with Lucilia those English country dances which are

generally repeated several times in the course of a ball; but the same gentleman always dances with the same lady, and the greatest gravity is maintained in those parties of pleasure.

Lucilia danced nobly but without vivacity. The sentiments which filled her breast added to her natural seriousness; as the company were curious to know if she loved Lord Nelvil, they regarded her with more than usual attention which hindered her from looking at Oswald, and her timidity was so great that she neither saw nor heard any thing. This trouble and reserve touched Lord Nelvil forcibly at first; but as there was no alteration in her appearance, he began to be chagrined at it, and he compared this long range of ladies and gentlemen, and that monotonous music, with the animated gracefulness of the music and dances of Italy. This reflection threw him into a profound reverie, and Corinna would still have enjoyed some

moments of happiness if she could have then known what passed in Lord Nelvil's mind. But the unfortunate Corinna traversed at random the sombre alleys of a residence she could once consider as her own; a stranger, yet nevertheless upon her paternal soil; an exile, and yet near the person of him she had expected to be her husband. The ground sunk under her, and the agitation of grief alone usurped the place of strength; she thought that she might meet Oswald in the garden; but she did not know herself what she desired.

The castle was placed upon an eminence, at the foot of which flowed a rivulet. There were a great number of trees upon one of the banks, but the other presented nothing except barren rocks slightly covered with brushwood. Corinna in walking found herself near the river; she heard at one and the same time the music of festivity and the murmuring of the

waters. The lustre of the lamps in the ball-room was reflected from the midst of the river, while the pale glimmering of the moon alone threw a light upon the desert rocks on the other side. It might have been said of this scenery, as it is in the tragedy of Hamlet, "Ghosts wandered around the palace where the carousals were going forward."

The unfortunate Corinna, alone and abandoned, had only one step to take in order to plunge her into eternal oblivion. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "if to-morrow, when he shall walk along these banks with the joyous troops of his friends, and if his triumphant steps should stumble upon the remains of her whom once he loved, will he not feel an emotion which will avenge me? will he not feel a pang which will resemble what I suffer? No—no," she resumed, "it is not vengeance I wish by seeking death, it is repose." She was silent, and again contemplated that river

which flowed so rapidly and yet so regularly, that Nature so well arranged while the human mind was all tumult; she recollected when Lord Nelvil threw himself into the waves to save an old man. “How good was he then?” exclaimed Corinna; “Alas!” said she weeping, “perhaps he is so still; why should I blame him—because I suffer? perhaps he does not know it, perhaps if he saw me——” and all at once she formed the resolution of inquiring for Lord Nelvil, in the midst of this festivity, and speaking to him for a moment. She ascended towards the castle with that kind of movement inspired by a decision newly taken, a decision that succeeds after long uncertainty; but on approaching him she was seized with such a trembling, that she was obliged to sit down on a stone bench before the windows. The crowd of peasants assembled to see the dancing, hindered her from being observed.

Lord Nelvil at this instant came forward

upon the balcony; he wished to breathe the cool air of the evening; some rose bushes which grew near him brought to his recollection the perfume which Corinna habitually carried, and the impression it occasioned startled him. This long and tedious entertainment fatigued him; he recollected the fine taste of Corinna in the arrangement of a fete, her knowledge of every thing that concerned the fine arts, and he felt that it was only in a regular and domestic life that he had represented Lucilia with any pleasure for his companion. Every thing which belonged in the least to imagination and to poetry retraced to him the memory of Corinna, and renewed his regret. While he was in this disposition one of his friends approached him, and they conversed a few minutes together. Corinna then heard Oswald's voice.

What inexpressible emotion is in the voice of him we love! A confused mixture of tenderness and dread! For there are some

impressions so lively, that our poor and feeble nature is itself afraid of experiencing them. One of Oswald's friends said to him: "Don't you think this ball a charming one?" "Yes," answered he distractedly; "yes indeed," he repeated with a sigh. This sigh, and the melancholic accent of his voice, gave Corinna a lively joy; she thought herself certain of recovering Oswald's heart, of being still heard by him; and rising with precipitation she advanced towards one of the servants of the house to ask for Lord Nelvil. If she had followed this movement, how different would have been the fate of Oswald and herself.

At this instant Lucilia approached the window, and seeing pass through the garden in the dark a female dressed in white, but without any peculiar ornament of dress, her curiosity was excited. She looked out, and she thought she could recognise the appearance of her sister; but

as she never doubted that she had died seven years ago: the terror this vision threw her into made her faint; every one ran to her assistance. Corinna could not now find the domestic to whom she wished to speak, and withdrew further into the alley that she might not be observed.

Lucilia returned to her senses, yet dared not avow what had so alarmed her. But as since her mother had strongly impressed upon her mind all the ideas connected with religion, she was convinced that the spirit of her sister had appeared to her, marching towards the tomb of their father, in order to reproach her with her neglect of this tomb, in joining in a scene of gaiety in that place, before having fulfilled a pious duty to his revered ashes. At the moment therefore when Lucilia thought herself certain of not being observed, she left the ball-room. Corinna was astonished to see her thus alone in the garden, and supposed that Lord Nelvil would soon

rejoin her, and that perhaps he had requested a secret interview in order to obtain permission from her to make known his wishes to her mother. This idea rendered her motionless; but she soon remarked that Lucilia turned her steps towards a bower in which she knew the monument of her father was raised, and accusing herself in her turn of not having begun by shedding her tears of regret upon it, she followed her sister at some distance, hiding herself by means of the trees. She perceived at last the black sarcophagus raised upon the spot where the remains of Lord Edgermond were interred. A profound emotion forced her to stop, and she leaned against a tree. Lucilia also stopped and bowed respectfully at the sight of the tomb.

At this moment Corinna was ready to disclose herself to her sister, to demand from her, in the name of their father, her rank and her husband; but Lucilia took some

steps with precipitation in order to approach the monument and Corinna's courage failed. There is in the heart of a woman so much timidity united to impetuosity of sentiments, that a trifle can restrain her, and a trifle can urge her forward. Lucilia threw herself upon her knees before her father's tomb; she spread from off her face her flaxen hair which a garland of flowers held together, and raised her eyes to heaven in order to pray. Corinna was placed behind the trees, and without being discovered, she easily saw her sister whose face was illuminated by a single ray of the moon; she was suddenly seized with a tenderness purely generous. She contemplated that expression of piety so pure, that countenance so juvenile, that the traits of infancy might be still remarked in it; she recollected the time when she had served as a mother to Lucilia, she reflected upon herself, she thought she was not far from thirty years of age, that period at which the decline of youth commences,

while her sister had before her a long perspective, as yet troubled by no guilty recollections, nor by any past life for which she had to answer either before others, or before her own conscience. "If I shew myself to Lucilia," she said, "if I speak to her, her soul, as yet tranquil, will be soon agitated, and peace will perhaps never be restored to it. I have already suffered much, and I know how to suffer more; but the innocent Lucilia may pass in an instant from tranquillity to the most cruel agitation: and shall I, who have held her in my arms, who have lulled her to sleep upon my bosom, shall I precipitate her into a world of sorrow? Thus thought Corinna, and yet love fought a cruel battle in her heart against this disinterested sentiment, and this exaltation of mind, which induced her to sacrifice herself.

Lucilia then exclaimed aloud: "Ah! my dear father, pray for me." Corinna

heard her, and falling also upon her knees, she asked the paternal benediction also, and, bathed in tears, she also called up from the bottom of her heart, sentiments still more pure than love. Lucilia continuing her prayer, pronounced distinctly these words ; “ Ah ! my dear sister, intercede for me in Heaven ; you have loved me in my infancy, continue to protect me.” Oh ! how this prayer melted Corinna ! Lucilia at last with a voice full of fervency, added, “ My father, pardon me that single instance of neglect, which has been caused by a sentiment which you yourself have prescribed. I am not culpable in loving him whom you have destined for my husband ; but finish your desire, and cause him to chuse me for the companion of his life ; I cannot be happy without him, but he shall never know that I love him ; never shall this trembling heart betray its secret ! Oh my God ! Oh my father ! console your daughter, and render her worthy the esteem and tender-

ness of Oswald.” “ Yes,” repeated Corinna, in a low voice, “ hear her prayer, oh my father, and grant your other daughter a sweet and tranquil death.”

On finishing this solemn wish, the greatest effort of which the soul of Corinna was capable, she drew from her bosom the letter containing the ring given her by Oswald, and she suddenly withdrew. She knew well that by sending this letter and keeping Lord Nelvil ignorant of her being in England, she would break their connection and give Oswald to Lucilia ; but in presence of this tomb, the obstacles which separated her from him, presented themselves to her reflection with more force than ever ; she remembered the words of Mr. Dickson : *his father forbade him to marry that Italian*, and she thought that her own father also joined in opinion with Oswald's, so that paternal authority entirely condemned her love. The innocence of Lucilia, her youth, her purity, exalted

Corinna's imagination, and she was for a single moment at least, proud to sacrifice herself, that Oswald might be at peace with his country, with his family, and with himself.

The music she heard upon approaching the castle, kept up Corinna's courage. She perceived a poor blind old man sitting under a tree listening to the noise of the ball. She advanced towards him, and asked him to deliver the letter she now gave him, to one of the domestics of the castle. By this means she avoided even the risk of Lord Nelvil discovering that a female conveyed it to him. In short, whoever saw Corinna delivering this letter, must have known that it contained the destiny of her life. Her looks, her trembling hand, her solemn and agitated voice, all announced one of those terrible moments when destiny takes possession of us, when the unhappy being no longer acts but as the slave of fatality which pursues him.

Corinna watched the old man at a distance, he was led by a faithful dog ; she saw him give her letter to one of Lord Nelvil's domestics, who by chance, at this moment, was bringing some other letters to the castle. Every circumstance concurred in leaving nothing more to be hoped. Corinna proceeded a few steps further, to see this domestic enter the door, and when she saw him no longer, when she was upon the highway, when she heard the music no longer, and the lights of the castle were no longer visible, a cold sweat ran down her forehead, and a deadly shivering seized her ; she would have still advanced, but Nature refused, and she fell insensible upon the road.

BOOK XVIII.

CHAP. I.

THE RESIDENCE AT FLORENCE.

THE Count d'Erfeuil after having passed some time in Switzerland, and having become tired of Nature among the Alps, as he had been of the fine arts at Rome, suddenly felt a desire of visiting England, where, he was assured, was to be found the utmost profundity of genius; and he persuaded himself one morning when he rose, that it was of this quality he stood most in need. This third experiment not having succeeded any better than the two former; his attachment to Lord Nelvil suddenly revived, and having said to himself that there was no happiness except in true

friendship, he set out for Scotland. He went first to Lord Nelvil's and did not find him at home; but having learnt that he might be met with at Lady Edgermond's, he instantly re-mounted his horse in order to find him, so anxious was he to see him again. As he was riding furiously along, he saw by the side of the road a female stretched out motionless; he stopped, dismounted, and hastened to her assistance. How great was his surprize when he knew Corinna notwithstanding her deadly paleness! He was filled with pity, and with the assistance of his servant, he arranged some branches upon which to carry her, his design being to bring her in this manner to Lady Edgermond's castle. There-sina, however, who had remained in Corinna's carriage, uneasy at not having seen her mistress return, came up at this moment, and thinking that Lord Nelvil alone had plunged her into this state, insisted that they should carry her to the next village. The Count d'Erfeuil followed Co-

rinna, and during eight days that she continued in a fever and delirium, he did not leave her; it was thus a frivolous man who recovered her, and a man of sensibility who pierced her heart.

This contrast struck Corinna when she resumed her senses, and she thanked the Count d'Erfeuil with profound emotion; he answered by endeavouring quickly to console her; he was more capable of noble actions than of serious expressions, and Corinna would have found in such a character assistance rather than a friend. She tried to recall her reason, and to retrace to herself what had passed; for a long time she could scarcely remember what she had done, and the motives which had decided her conduct. Perhaps she began to find her sacrifice too great, and she thought of bidding a last adieu to Lord Nelvil before quitting England, when, upon the day following that upon which she had resumed the exercise of her reason, she

saw in a public newspaper, which by accident fell into her hands, the following article.

“Lady Edgermond has just been informed that her step-daughter, whom she thought dead in Italy, is still alive and enjoys at Rome a very high literary reputation under the name of Corinna. Lady Edgermond has honourably acknowledged her, and shared with her the inheritance of Lord Edgermond’s brother, who died in India.

“Lord Nelvil is to be married next Sunday to Miss Lucilia Edgermond, the youngest daughter of Lord Edgermond, and the only daughter of Lady Edgermond his widow. The contract was signed yesterday.”

Corinna, to her own sorrow, did not lose the use of her senses on reading this intelligence; it caused a sudden revolution

in her mind, all the interests of life abandoned her ; she felt like a person condemned to death, but who does not yet know if his sentence is to be executed ; and from that moment the resignation of despair is the only sentiment of his soul.

The Count d'Erfeuil entered her chamber, he found her still paler than when she had fainted, and he enquired for her with anxiety. " I am not ill now. I wish to set out the day after to-morrow, which is Sunday," she said with solemnity, " I shall go as far as Plymouth, and I shall embark for Italy." " I shall accompany you," answered the Count d'Erfeuil, " I have nothing to keep me in England. I shall be delighted in taking this voyage with you." " You are very kind," replied Corinna, " we must not judge from appearances——" then hesitating for a while, she said : " I accept your protection as far as Plymouth because I am not certain of guiding myself thither ; but

when once on board, the vessel will convey me safely in whatever state I am, 'tis all one." She made a sign to the Count d'Erfeuil to leave her by herself, and she wept a long time, supplicating Heaven to give her strength, and to support her misery. Corinna had nothing more of her impetuosity left, the force of her vigorous constitution was exhausted, and this depression, which she could not account for, made her calm. Misfortune had overcome her; sooner or later the most rebellious spirits are bent under its yoke!

On the following Sunday, Corinna set out from Scotland with the Count d'Erfeuil. "To day," she said, on rising from her bed to step into her carriage, "To day—" the Count d'Erfeuil would have interrogated her, but she made him no answer and became silent again. They passed a church, and Corinna asked Count d'Erfeuil's permission that she should enter it for a moment; she threw herself on her

knees before the altar, and imagining that she saw Oswald and Lucilia, she prayed for them ; but the emotion she felt was so strong, that on endeavouring to rise she staggered, and could not move a single step without being supported by Theresina and the Count d'Erfeuil who appeared before her. The people in the church rose up in order to allow her to pass, and seemed much affected. " I must be very ill indeed," said she to the Count d'Erfeuil, " there are some persons, Count, who at this very moment, perhaps, are leaving church with a triumphant step."

The Count d'Erfeuil did not hear the latter part of this sentence ; he was good but he had no sensibility ; during the journey, therefore, though he loved Corinna, yet he was weary of her melancholy, and he endeavoured to drive it from her, as if, in order to forget all the chagrins of life, it were only necessary to wish it. Sometimes he would say to her, " I am sure I

have said all I can to relieve you." A singular kind of consolation, yet 'tis the satisfaction which vanity takes to itself at the expence of misery !

Corinna made wonderful efforts to dissemble what she suffered, for it is natural to be ashamed of strong affections in presence of frivolous minds ; a sentiment of shame is attached to every thing which is not understood, to every thing that must be explained, and to those secrets of the soul, in short, which cannot be alleviated ; unless we divine them without their being disclosed by the object of our communication. Corinna was sorry that it was not in her power to express her gratitude sufficiently for the marks of friendship Count d'Erfeuil had shewn her ; but there was in his voice, in his accent, and in his looks, so much distraction and so much want of amusement, that one might be induced every moment to forget his generous actions, as he forgot them himself. It was

certainly very noble to put little value upon his good actions : but it may happen that the indifference sometimes evinced as to any good action we have done, an indifference so praiseworthy in itself, may, nevertheless, in certain characters, be the effect of frivolity.

Corinna, during her delirium, had betrayed almost all her secrets, and the public papers had informed Count d'Erfeuil of the rest ; several times he evinced a desire that Corinna should converse with him upon what he called *her affairs* ; but these words were sufficient to freeze the confidence of Corinna, and she begged of him not to require her to pronounce the name of Lord Nelvil in future. At this moment when Corinna and Count d'Erfeuil separated, she did not know how to express her gratitude towards him ; because she was both very glad to find herself once more alone, and vexed at being separated from one who

had acted so kindly ; she tried to thank him, but he told her so naturally not to say any thing more about it, that she was silent. She charged him to inform Lady Edgermond that she rejected entirely all share in the inheritance of her uncle, and requested him to execute this commission as if he had received it from Italy, without informing her mother-in-law that she had come to England.

“ And is Lord Nelvil to know it ? ” said the Count d’Erfeuil. These words made Corinna shudder. She was silent for some time, and then replied ; “ you may tell him soon ; yes, very soon. My friends at Rome will inform you when you may.” “ Let me entreat you to be careful of your health,” said the Count d’Erfeuil ; “ do you know I am uneasy about you ? ” “ Indeed ? ” answered Corinna ; “ but, in truth, I believe, you have occasion.” The count gave her his arm to conduct her to the vessel. At the moment of em-

barking she turned towards England, towards that country which she was quitting for ever, and in which lived the only object of her affection, and of her sorrows. Her eyes overflowed with tears, the first that has escaped her in the presence of the Count d'Erfeuil. "Beauteous Corinna," said he, "forget an ungrateful man; remember the friends who are so tenderly attached to you; be advised by me, and reflect with pleasure on all the advantages which you possess." At these words Corinna withdrew her hand from the Count, and retired a few steps from him; then reproaching herself for the emotion to which she had yielded, she went up to him and kindly bade him adieu. Count d'Erfeuil did not in the least perceive what had passed in Corinna's soul; he entered the boat with her, warmly recommending her to the captain, and with the most amiable care attended to all the minute circumstances which could render her passage more agreeable; returning, he saluted the

vessel with his handkerchief as long as he could. Corinna expressed her gratitude to the Count; but, alas! was he the friend on whom she was to rely?

Slight sentiments are often of long duration; nothing destroys, because nothing obstructs them; they follow circumstances, disappearing and retiring with them; while profound affections inflict an incurable wound, leaving the most painful sensation in the bosom.

CHAPTER II.

A FAVOURABLE wind wafted Corinna to Leghorn in less than a month. During almost the whole of this time she was ill of a fever, and the distress of her mind aggravating her disorder, brought her so low that all her impressions were confused, and left no distinct traces behind. On her arrival, she hesitated whether she should proceed immediately to Rome; but though her best friends expected her in that city, she felt an invincible repugnance to live in a place where she had known Oswald. She figured to herself her own house, the door which he opened twice a day to visit her, and shuddered at the idea of returning thither without him. She resolved, therefore, to go to Florence; and as she was convinced that she could

not long bear up against the anguish she endured, it was fit, that she should gradually detach herself from existence, and begin by living at a distance from her friends, far from the city which had witnessed her successes, far from the place where people would endeavour to cheer her spirits, where they would call upon her to display the same talents as formerly, when an invincible dejection rendered every kind of effort hateful to her.

As she travelled through the fertile plains of Tuscany, as she approached Florence, that city so perfumed with flowers, on finding herself again in Italy, Corinna experienced only painful sensations. All the rural beauties which, at any other time would have intoxicated her, now filled her with melancholy. How terrible is that despair which this genial atmosphere is incapable of mitigating ! either love or religion is necessary for the relish of nature, and at this moment the sorrowing Corinna

had lost the first of earthly blessings, without having yet found that tranquillity which devotion alone can impart to souls endued with sensibility and overwhelmed with distress.

Tuscany is a highly cultivated and delightful country, but does not strike the imagination like the environs of Rome. The Romans have so thoroughly eradicated the primitive institutions of the people by whom Tuscany was formerly inhabited, as to leave scarcely any of the vestiges of antiquity which excite such powerful interest at Naples and at Rome. But you may observe there a different species of historical beauties; I mean the towns which bear the republican genius of the middle age. At Sienna, the public square where the people assembled, the balcony from which the magistrates harangued them, are striking objects to the traveller of the least reflexion; he feels that a democratic government has existed there.

'Tis a real gratification to listen to the Tuscans even of the lowest class; their expressions replete with imagination and eloquence, afford an idea of the pleasure that we should have enjoyed in the city of Athens, when the people spoke that harmonious Greek which so much resembles music. It excites a very extraordinary sensation to fancy yourself in the midst of a nation, all the individuals of which are equally polished, and appear to be of the superior class; 'tis at least an illusion, which purity of language for a few moments produces.

The aspect of Florence recalls to the mind its history previous to the elevation of the Medicis to the sovereign authority. The palaces of the principal families resemble fortresses erected for the purpose of defence; you may still see on the outside of them the iron rings to which the standards of each party were affixed: in a word, every thing about them was ar-

ranged rather to maintain distinct interests than consolidate them all into one commonwealth. The town may be said to have been constructed for civil war. The hall of justice has turrets from which the approach of an enemy might be perceived, and from which those within might defend themselves. So strong was the antipathy between certain families, that you may see palaces constructed in the most singular manner, because the proprietors would not suffer any part of them to stand in the spot where hostile houses had been demolished. Here the Pazzi conspired against the Medici; there the Guelphs assassinated the Gibelines; in short, every part of the city exhibits traces of discord and rivalry; but at present they are laid to rest, and the stones of the edifices have also retained something of their physiognomy. Hatred has ceased, because there is no longer any object of ambition, and because a state without glory, as without power, is no longer dis-

puted by its inhabitants. The life they lead at Florence at the present day is singularly monotonous; they take a walk every afternoon on the banks of the Arno, and at night enquire of one another if they have been there.

Corinna fixed her residence in a country-house at a little distance from the city. She acquainted prince Castel-Forte with her intended place of abode, in a letter which was the only one she wrote, for she had conceived such an abhorrence of all the ordinary actions of life, that the least resolution she was obliged to take, or the most trifling order she had occasion to give, redoubled her pain. Her days were spent in listless inactivity; she rose from her bed, lay down, rose again, opened a book, but could not comprehend a single line of its contents. She often remained whole hours at her window, then walked with hasty step in her garden; at other times she would take a nosegay and strive

to stupefy herself with the perfume of the flowers. The sense of existence at length began incessantly to oppress her like an intolerable burden, and she tried a thousand methods to soothe that insatiable faculty of thought which no longer presented to her, as formerly, the most diversified reflections, but one single idea, one single image armed with cruel stings which rent her heart.

CHAPTER III.

CORINNA one day resolved to visit the beautiful churches which decorate Florence; she recollected that when at Rome, a few hours spent at St. Peter's never failed to sooth her soul, and she hoped to receive the same relief from the temples of Florence: on her way to the city she passed through the charming wood on the banks of the Arno. It was a delicious evening in the month of June; the air was perfumed by an inconceivable abundance of roses, and happiness was depicted in the countenances of all she met. Corinna felt an aggravation of her melancholy, on seeing herself excluded from the general felicity which Providence confers on the greatest part of his creatures; nevertheless she blessed it with fervor for the blessings

it bestowed on mankind. "I am an exception to the universal order," thought she, "there is happiness for all, and this dreadful faculty of suffering which tortures me, is a manner of feeling peculiar to myself. O my God! why hast thou chosen me to endure this pain? Might I not also, like thy divine Son, implore thee to let this cup pass from me?"

The appearance of bustle and activity among the inhabitants of the city astonished Corinna. Since she had ceased to take any interest in life, she could not conceive what made people pass and repass in such haste: and proceeding slowly over the broad flag-stones of the pavement of Florence, she totally forgot whither she had intended to go. At length she came to the celebrated brass gates executed by Ghiberti for the baptistery of St. John, close to the cathedral of Florence.

She examined for some time this im-

mense work, on which nations of bronze, of very diminutive, but very distinct, proportions, present a multitude of varied physiognomies, all of which express an idea of the artist, a conception of his imagination. "What patience!" exclaimed Corinna, "what respect for posterity! and yet how few are there who bestow any attention on these gates, through which the multitude passes with heedlessness, ignorance, or disdain. O how difficult is it for man to escape oblivion, and how powerful is death!"

It was in this cathedral that Giuliano de Medicis was assassinated; not far from it, in the church of St. Lawrence, is seen the marble chapel enriched with precious stones, containing the tombs of the Medicis, and the statues of Giuliano and Lorenzo by Michael Angelo. That of Lorenzo meditating vengeance on the assassins of his brother, deserves the honour of being called the conception of Michael

Angelo. At the feet of these statues are Aurora and Night; the awakening of the one, and the sleep of the other have extraordinary expression. A poet wrote some verses on the statue of night, which concluded with these words: "Though she sleeps she lives; awaken her if you do believe otherwise, and she will speak to you. Michael Angelo, who cultivated letters, without which every species of imagination speedily becomes extinct, returned this answer in the name of Night:

Grato m'è il sonno e più l'esser di sasso.
Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura,
Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura.
Però non mi destar, deh parla basso.

"It is pleasing to me to sleep, and still more agreeable to be made of marble. As long as injustice and shame exist, it is a great happiness that I can neither see nor hear. Therefore pray speak low and do not awake me."

Michael Angelo is the only sculptor of modern times that has given the human figure a character which resembles neither antique beauty, nor the affectation of the present age. The spectator imagines that he beholds in it the spirit of the middle age, an energetic but gloomy soul, incessant activity, strongly marked forms, features which bear the stamp of the passions, but do not exhibit models of perfect beauty. Michael Angelo is the genius of his own school, for he imitated none, not even the ancients.

His tomb is in the church of Santa Croce. He wished it to be placed opposite to a window, from which may be seen the dome constructed by Filippo Brunelleschi, as if his ashes could receive delight beneath the marble, from the aspect of this cupola, the model of that of St. Peter's. The church of Santa Croce contains perhaps the greatest assemblage of illustrious dead to be found in Europe.

Corinna felt a profound emotion as she walked between the two rows of tombs. Here lies Galileo who was persecuted by men for having discovered the secrets of Heaven; there Machiavel, who revealed the art of committing crimes, rather as an observer than as a criminal himself, but whose lessons are more serviceable to the oppressor than the oppressed; Aretino, who devoted his days to mirth, and met with nothing serious in the world but death; Boccacio, whose pleasing imagination withstood the combined calamities of civil war and pestilence; yonder is a picture in honour of Dante, as if the Florentines, who suffered him to perish in exile, could still pride themselves in his glory. (9) In this place are also observed many other honourable names—names celebrated during the lives of those who bore them, but the sound of which is gradual by growing fainter from generation to generation, till at length their fame is totally extinguished. (10)

The sight of this church decorated with such noble memorials, excited the enthusiasm of Corinna. The aspect of the living had dejected her; the silent presence of the dead revived, at least for a moment, that mulation of glory with which she was once animated; she paced the church with a firmer step, and some ideas of former times flashed across her soul. She beheld a number of young priests advance beneath the vaults; they walked slowly round the choir singing with a low voice. She enquired of one of them the meaning of the ceremony, "We are praying for our dead," replied he. "Yes," thought Corinna, "you are right to call them *your* dead: 'tis the only glorious property which is left you. Oh! why did Oswald stifle those talents which I received from Heaven, and which were destined to excite enthusiasm in those souls which are in unison with mine! O my God!" exclaimed she, falling upon her knees, "'tis not out of vain pride that I

implore thee to restore those talents with which thou didst once endow me. Those obscure saints were doubtless the best, who had learned to live and to die for thee; but different careers are assigned to mortals; and the genius which should celebrate the generous virtues, which should devote its labours to all that is noble, good, and true, might hope to be received, at least, into the exterior courts of Heaven." Corinna's eyes were fixed on the ground as she finished this prayer, and they were caught by the following inscription on the tombstone upon which she had knelt. *Alone at my rising, alone at my sitting, I am also alone here.* "Ah!" cried Corinna, "'tis an answer to my prayer. What emulation is it possible for her to feel who is alone upon the earth? Who would participate in my reputation were I to obtain any? Who would be interested in my lot? What sentiment could cheer my spirits during my labours? His approbation would be necessary for my reward."

Another epitaph likewise engaged her attention. *Lament not my fate*, said a man who died in his youth; *you would not, if you knew what afflictions this tomb has spared me.* “How powerfully these words tend to detach one from life!” said Corinna, while tears fell from her eyes. Amidst the tumult of a city, here is a church which would unfold to men the secret of all things, if they chose; but they pass by without entering it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE feelings of emulation which had for a few moments soothed Corinna, led her the next day to the gallery of Florence: she hoped to recover her former relish for the arts, and to excite within herself some interest for her former occupations. The fine arts are still highly republican at Florence: the statues and pictures may be seen at all hours with the greatest facility. Intelligent men, paid by the government, are placed there as public functionaries, for the purpose of explaining all these master-pieces. It is a relic of the respect for talents of every kind which has always existed in Italy, but particularly at Florence, since the Medicis undertook to compensate for their

power by their encouragement of the arts and sciences, and for their ascendancy over the actions of men, by the freedom of thought which they allowed. The lower classes at Florence are very fond of the arts, and blend this taste with their devotions, which they observe with greater regularity in Tuscany, than in any other part of Italy. It is not rare to see them confound mythological figures with Christian history. A Florentine of the lower class shewed some strangers a Minerva which he called Judith, an Apollo to which he gave the name of David; and in explaining a basso relievo representing the taking of Troy, assured them that Cassandra was a good Christian.

The gallery of Florence is an immense collection, and you may spend many days in it without acquiring a knowledge of the whole of its contents. Corinna inspected all these objects, and had the mor-

tification to find herself absent and indifferent to them. The statue of Niobe excited interest ; she was struck with that serenity, with that dignity, which was discoverable amidst the most profound grief. Certainly, in such a situation, the figure of a real mother would be entirely distorted ; but the ideal perfection of the arts, preserves the beauty as well as the despair ; and what makes the deepest impression in works of genius, is not the calamity itself, but the power which the soul retains over that calamity. Not far from the statue of Niobe is the head of the dying Alexander ; these two kinds of physiognomy afford abundant subject for reflection. That of Alexander displays astonishment and indignation at not having been able to vanquish Nature. The anguish of maternal love is depicted in every feature of Niobe : she presses her daughter to her bosom with heart-rending anxiety. The grief expressed in this admirable figure, bears the character of

that fatality, which cut off the ancients from all recourse to religion. Niobe raises her eyes towards the heavens, but without hope, for the gods themselves are her enemies.

Corinna, on her return home, endeavoured to reflect on what she had seen, and attempted to compose as she had formerly done; but an absence of mind which it was impossible to overcome, stopped her at every page. She had to seek every word with considerable trouble; she frequently wrote down passages without any sense, passages which affrighted even herself when she read them over, and which seemed like the ravings of a person in the delirium of a fever. Finding herself incapable of diverting her thoughts from her own situation, she described her sufferings; but no longer by those general ideas, those universal sentiments which agree with the heart of

every individual. It was the cry of sorrow, a cry which at last appeared monotonous, like that of the birds of night; there was too much ardor in her expressions, too much impetuosity, and too few shades; it was misery, but it was no longer talent. A real emotion is doubtless necessary for writing well, but it has no occasion to be acute. Happiness is necessary for every thing, and the most melancholy poetry must be inspired by a kind of ecstasy which presupposes energy and intellectual pleasures. Genuine grief has no natural fecundity: it produces only a gloomy agitation, which is continually leading the mind back to the same ideas. Thus the knight, persecuted by cruel fate, traversed in vain a thousand mazes, and always found himself in the same place.

The bad state of Corinna's health, likewise contributed to derange her talents.

Among her papers were found various reflections, some of which will be found in the next chapter, and which she penned, during the time she was making these unavailing efforts to render herself again capable of continued application.

CHAPTER V.

FRAGMENTS OF THE REFLECTIONS OF
CORINNA.

“ MY talents no longer exist : I regret them. I could have wished my name to have reached him with some reputation ; I could have desired that, in reading a work of mine, he might have sympathized in the sentiments it contained.

“ I was wrong to hope that on his return to his country and to his former habits, he would retain the ideas and the sentiments which were alone capable of uniting us. There is so much to be advanced against a female like me, and the only answer that can be made to all this, is the understanding and the soul which I

possess ;—but what an answer for the majority of men.

“ It is, however, a mistaken notion to dread the superiority of the understanding and of the soul : this superiority is highly moral ; for the more comprehensive is the human mind, the more indulgent it is, and the more profound are the feelings of the heart, the greater is its benevolence.

“ How can two beings who have communicated to each other their most secret thoughts, who have conversed together concerning God, the immortality of the soul, and the sorrows incident to human nature—how can they all at once become strangers to each other ? What an astonishing mystery is love ! Sentiments admirable or worthless ! Religious as were the martyrs, or colder than the most common friendship ! Does that which is the most involuntary emotion in the world

proceed from heaven or from terrestrial passions? Should we submit to or oppose it? Ah! what violent tempests rage in the recesses of the heart!

“Talents were given for a resource. When Dominichino was confined in a convent, he painted superb pictures on the walls of his prison, and left masterpieces behind to mark his residence there; but his sufferings originated in exterior circumstances; his distress was not that of the soul: when sorrow has seated itself there, it is incapable of exertion: the springs of action are totally dried up.

“I sometimes examine myself as a stranger would do, and I cannot forbear pitying myself. I possessed understanding, integrity, benevolence, generosity, sensibility—why should all these qualities turn out so very ill? Is the world really wicked? And do certain qualities de-

prive us of our arms instead of giving us strength?

“ 'Tis a pity: I was born to make a distinguished figure; I die, and no one has any idea of me, though I have acquired celebrity. Had I been happy, had not the fever of the heart consumed me, I had contemplated human destiny from a very exalted situation, I had discovered in it unknown relations with nature and with heaven; but I am confined by the shackles of misery; and how is it possible to think with freedom, when I feel their pressure every breath I draw?

“ Why did he not strive to render her happy, whose secret he alone possessed—her who disclosed to none but him the recesses of her heart? Ah! it is possible for a man to part from those ordinary females, who love by accident: but for her who can only love

the man she admires, for her whose judgment is penetrating though her imagination is warm—for her the universe contains but one single object.

“ I acquired notions of life from the poets : they were not correct ; there is something dry in the reality which we, in vain, endeavour to alter.

“ When I call to mind my successes, I feel a sentiment of irritation. Why was I to be told that I was charming, if I was not destined to be beloved ! Why was I to be inspired with confidence, in order to be the more dreadfully deceived ? Will he find in another more understanding, more sensibility, more tenderness than in me ? No : he will find less, and will be satisfied : he will feel himself in unison with society. What factitious joys and pains it creates !

“ In the presence of the sun and of

the starry spheres, we are satisfied with loving and feeling ourselves worthy of each other. But society ! how hard and how frivolous society renders the heart and mind ! How it subjects our lives to the judgment of public opinion ! If mankind were one day to meet, each freed from the influence of all, what serenity would pervade the soul ! what new ideas, what genuine sentiments would refresh it !

“ Nature is also cruel. My personal charms shall soon decay ; and in vain shall I then experience the most tender affections ; languid eyes would no longer bespeak the affections of the soul, would no longer move in my behalf.

“ There are within me pains which I shall never express, not even in writing ; I have not the power : love alone can fathom those abysses.

“ How happy are men who can rush into the midst of the battle, expose their lives, and indulge the enthusiastic feelings of honour and the contempt of danger ! But there are no external circumstances which can afford relief to the wounded spirit of woman ; she cannot flee from sorrow, and her existence is a state of lingering torture !

“ Sometimes, when I hear the harmonious sounds of music, it reminds me of the accomplishments and talents I possessed, of my abilities in singing, dancing, and poetical composition. I then feel disposed to shake off my woes and again invite joy to be my companion ; all at once an inward sentiment makes me shudder. I might be taken for a spirit that would fain continue a little longer on the earth, when the rays of Aurora and the approach of the living oblige it to vanish.

“ I wish that I were susceptible of

relishing the same amusements which the world affords. I once loved them, for they did me good. The reflections of solitude led me too far astray; my talents overpowered the influence of my impressions. Now that I have some steadiness in my looks as in my thoughts, whither are ye gaiety, grace, and imagination? Ah! how I wish once more to taste the sweets of hope, were it only for a moment! But, my lot is fixed; the desert affords no relief; the river is dried up as well as the drop, and it is as difficult to obtain felicity for a single day as for a whole life.

“ I think him culpable in his treatment of me; but when I compare him to other men, what affected, stupid, contemptible creatures they appear! He, he is an angel, but an angel armed with a flaming sword which has consumed my felicity. The person whom you love punishes you for the faults you have committed in this

world; 'tis the Deity himself that induces him with this power.

“ It is not the first passion that is indelible, it proceeds from the necessity of loving. But if, after you have known life, and in the full vigour of your judgment, you meet with the mind and soul which you had till then sought in vain, the imagination is subdued by truth, and you have reason to be unhappy.

“ How foolish it is, will most people on the contrary exclaim, to die of love, as if there were not a thousand other motives of existence. Enthusiasm of every kind appears ridiculous to those who are not under its influence. Poetry, love, religion, have the same origin; and there are people in whose opinion the sentiments which inspire them are folly. All is folly if we chuse to think so, except the care bestowed on our existence; in every thing besides error and illusion may be harboured.

“ That which contributes more than any other circumstance to make me wretched, is that he alone understood me, and perhaps he will one day find that I alone was able to comprehend him. I am the easiest, and at the same time the most difficult creature in the world. I like all good-natured persons for company for a few moments ; but Oswald is the only man in the world whom I could love with real friendship, and sincere affection. Imagination, wit, sensibility, what a combination ! Where in the universe is it to be found ? And yet the cruel Oswald possessed all those qualities—at least all their charms.

“ What could I have to say to others ? To whom could I speak ? What object of existence, what interest is now left to attach me to life ? I have known the acutest anguish, as well as the most delicious sentiments ; and to me the future is but the spectre of the past.

“ Why are happy situations so transient? Why are they more inconstant than others? Is sorrow the natural order? Pain is a convulsion to the body, but it is an habitual state to the mind.

Ahi ! null' altro che pianto al mondo dura.

PETRARCH:

“ Alas ! in the world nothing lasts but tears.”

Another life ! another life ! that is my hope ; but such is the power of the present, that we seek in heaven the same sentiments which have engaged us upon earth. In the mythologies of the north are depicted the shades of hunters, chasing the shades of stags in the clouds ; but what right have we to pronounce them to be shades? Where is reality to be found? Nothing is certain but sorrow ; that alone mercilessly keeps all the promises it has made.

“ My thoughts incessantly dwell on immortality, not on that which men con-

fer. Those who, to borrow to the expression of Dante, will call the present moment ancient, have ceased to interest me; but I cannot believe that my heart will be annihilated. No, my God, I cannot believe it. This heart which he refused is destined for thee, and then wilt be graciously pleased to accept it after having been disdained by a mortal.

“ I feel that I have not long to live, and this idea calms my troubled soul. In the state in which I am, increasing weakness is welcome; it is the sense of pain that becomes less acute.

“ I know not the reason why the mind, under distress and affliction, is more capable of superstition than of piety; I draw presages from every thing, and I am no longer able to place confidence in any thing. Ah! how sweet is devotion amidst happiness? What gratitude must not the wife of Oswald feel toward the Supreme Being!

“ Sorrow doubtless contributes greatly to improve the character ; we connect in idea our faults with our misfortunes, and a link visible at least to our eyes, seems to connect them ; but there is a term to this salutary effect.

“ A profound examination of my heart is necessary, before I can obtain

————tranquillo varco

A più tranquillo vita.

—A peaceful passage to a more peaceful life.

“ When I shall be actually extended on the bed of sickness, tranquillity will be restored to my heart : there is much innocence in the thoughts of the being at the point of death, and I am fond of the sentiments which that situation excites.

“ Thou incomprehensible riddle of life, which neither passion, nor grief, nor genius can explain, wilt thou unfold thyself to the suppliant ? Perhaps the simplest

of ideas could explain this mystery ! Perhaps we have approached close to it a thousand times in our miseries ! But this last step is impossible, and our vain efforts of every kind give great fatigue to the soul.

Fermossi al fin il cor che balzò tanto.

HIPPOLITO PINDEMONTÉ.

“ That heart which once throbbed so quick, has at length ceased to beat.”

CHAPTER VI.

PRINCE Castel-Forte left Rome, for the purpose of fixing his residence at Florence, near Corinna. She was grateful for this mark of friendship; but she was somewhat ashamed that she could no longer impart to conversation that charm which she had formerly done. She was absent and reserved; the decline of her health deprived her of the strength necessary to triumph, even for a moment, over the sentiments with which her mind was engaged. When she spoke she had still that interest which good-nature excites, but she was no longer animated by the desire of pleasing. Disappointed love weakens all the other affections; you are unable to explain what is passing in

the soul ; but as much as you have gained by felicity, so much you lose by affliction. The surplus of life produced by a sentiment which enables you to enjoy all nature, influences all the relations of life, and of society ; but existence is so impoverished when this immense hope is destroyed, that you become incapable of any spontaneous motion. Hence it is that so many duties enjoin women, and especially men, to respect and fear the love they inspire, for that passion may desolate for ever not only the heart, but also the mind.

Prince Castel-Forte began several times to speak to Corinna concerning subjects which formerly interested her ; on these occasions she was several moments before she returned any answer, because she did not at first hear him : but when the sound and the idea caught her attention, she made some reply that had neither the tone nor the vivacity which

were formerly so much admired in all she said, but which kept up the conversation for a few moments, and gave her an opportunity of returning to her reveries. At length she would make a new effort that she might not weary the kindness of Prince Castel-Forte, and would frequently substitute one expression for another, or contradict what she had just before said. She would then smile with pity at herself, and beg pardon of her friend for this kind of absurdity, of which she was but too conscious.

Prince Castel-Forte ventured to speak to her concerning Oswald, and Corinna even appeared to take a painful pleasure in this conversation; but such was the anguish of her feelings when it was over, that her friend resolved never to introduce the subject again. Prince Castel-Forte had a soul induced with sensibility; but a man, and especially one who is deeply in love with a woman, be he ever so gene-

rous, is at a loss how to soothe the passion she feels for another. A little self-love in him, and timidity in her, prevent the interchange of perfect confidence: besides, what end would it answer? There is no remedy except for those wounds which would heal of themselves.

Corinna and Prince Castel-Forte walked out every day on the banks of the Arno. He touched upon all the subjects of conversation, with an amiable mixture of interest and regard; she pressed his hand and thanked him; sometimes she attempted to speak of things which lay nearest to her heart. Her eyes overflowed with tears, and her emotions were too strong to be suppressed; her paleness and trembling were painful to be seen, and her friend soon endeavoured to lead her to other ideas. On one occasion she all at once began to joke with her accustomed grace; Prince Castle-Forte looked at her with surprize and joy, but she immediately retired bursting into tears.

She returned to dinner, and gave her hand to her friend, saying: "Pardon me, I entreat you; I would fain appear amiable to reward you for your kindness, but as that is impossible, have the generosity to indure me such as I am? Prince Castel-Forte was greatly alarmed at the state of Corinna's health. She was not threatened by any imminent danger, but it was impossible she could live long; unless some happy circumstances restored her strength. About this time Prince Castel-Forte received a letter from Lord Nelvil, and though it made no change in the state of things, since it confirmed the account of his marriage, yet it contained expressions which would have excited the most profound emotion in Corinna. The Prince Castel-Forte considered for whole hours within himself whether he should shew this letter to his friend, for he knew that it would make the deepest impression upon her, and he saw her so weak that he durst not venture. While

he was still deliberating, he received a second letter from Lord Nelvil, likewise filled with sentiments which would have affected Corinna; but also containing information that he had departed for America. The Prince Castel-Forte then resolved to say nothing on the subject. He perhaps did wrong, for what most severely afflicted Corinna was that Lord Nelvil did not write to her. This she durst not mention to any one; but though Oswald was for ever separated from her, a recollection, a regret from him would have been dear to her heart; and what appeared most distressing to her was that absolute silence which neither gave her occasion to utter his name herself, or to hear it pronounced by others.

A grief concerning which no person speaks to you, a grief which undergoes not the slightest change, either by the lapse of days or years, and is affected by no event, no vicissitude, is more corroding

than a variety of acute impressions. The Prince Castel-Forte followed the vulgar maxim which advises the employment of all possible means, to produce oblivion ; but there is no oblivion for persons of a strong imagination, and with such it is better to be continually renewing the same idea, to exhaust the soul in tears, than to oblige them to concentrate it within itself.

BOOK XIX.

CHAP. I.

RETURN OF OSWALD TO ITALY.

LET us now recapitulate those events which occurred in Scotland, subsequent to that tragical festivity when Corinna made such a painful sacrifice. The valet of Lord Nelvil brought him his letters at the ball ; he withdrew to peruse them ; he opened several, which came from his London banker, before he could decypher that epistle which was to determine his fate ; but no sooner did he distinguish the handwriting of Corinna, and behold the words : “ You are free ; ” no sooner did he recognise the ring, than he instantaneously felt alternate transports of grief and indigna-

tion. Two months had elapsed without a single line from Corinna, and this silence was now interrupted by such a laconic apostrophe, such an unequivocal mode of conduct ! He no longer doubted her infidelity ; he called to mind every thing which Lady Edgermond had urged concerning the fickle, inconstant disposition of Corinna ; he entered involuntarily into the inimical views of her rivals, because he still retained sufficient affection for her to be guilty of injustice. It escaped his memory that he had many months ago abandoned his scheme of wedlock with Corinna, and had conceived a violent passion for Lucilia. He regarded himself in the light of a sentimental lover betrayed by a treacherous mistress ; he became uneasy, unhappy, and enraged, but was chiefly actuated by a punctilio of pride, which over-ruled every other consideration, and inspired him with a desire to affect a superiority over the female who had forsaken him. We ought never to

congratulate ourselves on these high-born sentiments of dignity, when the affections of our heart are concerned; they are seldom predominant except when self-love has acquired an ascendancy over our passion; and had Lord Nelvil preserved the same affection for Corinna, as during his stay at Naples and Rome, his friendship would never have been dissolved by those imaginary wrongs which he imputed to her. Lady Edgermond soon perceived the uneasiness of Lord Nelvil; she was a woman of strong passions, disguised under a cold exterior; and that fatal distemper which she already presaged would prove mortal, redoubled her activity in espousing the interests of her daughter. She knew that her poor child loved Lord Nelvil, and trembled for her destiny by a premature disclosure of this secret. She never for a moment lost sight of Oswald, and divined the secrets of his soul with that intuitive sagacity which is ascribed to the peculiar genius of women, but is solely derived

from those habits of attention which genuine affection inspires. She found a pretence for demanding a private conference with Lord Nelvil on the day following, in order to hold a consultation about the affairs of Corinna, on the subject of her uncle's legacy, which she proposed to secure to her; in this conversation she quickly perceived that he was dissatisfied with Corinna, and artfully endeavouring to sooth his discontent with the idea of a noble revenge, she made him proposals to acknowledge her as her step-daughter.

Lord Nelvil was surprised at this sudden revolution in the sentiments of Lady Edgermond, but he conceived, (although this idea had never been expressly mentioned) that this offer would be ineffectual unless he espoused Lucilia. In one of those moments when our reflection does not keep pace with the rapidity of our actions, he demanded her in marriage of her mother. Lady Edgermond was so

overjoyed, that she could hardly pronounce a hasty yes; her consent was given, and Lord Nelvil quitted her room, bound by a solemn contract, of which he had not the most distant idea when he first entered it.

Whilst Lady Edgermond was preparing Lucilia for the interview, he took a few turns in the garden in great perturbation of mind. “Lucilia pleases me,” said he, “because I have a very superficial acquaintance with her; and it is preposterous to stake the happiness of my life upon a mystery which must sooner or later be unravelled.” Then being seized with a transport of returning tenderness for Corinna, he called to mind the letters he had written to her, which depicted too well the conflict of his soul. “She had good reason,” he exclaimed, “to dissolve this connexion. I had not the magnanimity to make her happy; but still it ought to have cost her a greater struggle, and this cold letter—yet who knows whether it

has not been bathed with her tears?" In uttering this ejaculation, his own tears began to flow apace. Absorbed in these meditations he strayed to a great distance from the castle, and the domestics sent by Lady Edgermond to inform him that his presence was required, had been long occupied in a fruitless search; he was himself surprized at his own negligence, and made haste to return.

On his entrance into the room, he beheld Lucilia on her knees, with her face concealed in her mother's lap; this was the most graceful and affecting attitude she could possibly assume; no sooner did she hear the voice of Lord Nelvil, than elevating her beautiful visage bedewed with tears, and presenting him her hand: "You are not come, I suppose, my lord," said she, "to force me from my mother's arms."

This charming manner of signifying her consent, won the heart of Oswald. He

knelt down beside her and besought Lady Edgermond to suffer Lucilia to incline her countenance towards his own; and thus did this innocent damsel receive that first impression which emancipated her from a state of childhood. Her countenance was overspread with crimson blushes. When Oswald gazed at her, he felt the purity and sanctity of that alliance which he had just formed, and how ravishing soever the beauty of Lucilia might be at that very instant, it was far less seductive than the heavenly charms of her modesty.

The days previous to the Sunday appointed for the consummation of their nuptials, were set apart for the arrangements preparatory to the wedding. In the mean time, Lucilia was more reserved than usual in her conversation; but whatever she said, had an air of dignified simplicity, and Lord Nelvil commended and approved each of her expressions. He however, still felt something wanting in

her company ; their conversation was simply a query and a rejoinder ; she never bore a conspicuous part nor endeavoured to support it : this was all mighty well, but that perpetual zest and lively spirit was wanting of which we regret the absence, when we are acquainted with its pleasures. This brought Corinna afresh to the recollection of Lord Nelvil, but as he never heard her name mentioned, he was in hopes that her image would finally become a mere chimera, the object of his vain regrets.

Lucilia having learnt from her mother that her sister was still living and resided in Italy, had the greatest curiosity to sound Lord Nelvil on this subject ; but Lady Edgermond strictly enjoined her to silence, and Lucilia acquiesced, according to her custom, without demanding an explanation of her motives.

On the morning of their wedding the

image of Corinna obtruded itself again upon the mind of Oswald more forcibly than ever, and he was himself terrified at the lively impression it made upon him. He then invoked the departed shade of his father, protesting that he had solely acted in obedience to his wishes, and in order to obtain his benediction in Heaven, had accomplished his will upon earth. Fortified by these pious sentiments, he accused himself of having injured Lucilia, and repaired to the house of Lady Edgermond. When he gazed at the damsel, her charms were so powerful, that an angel descending from the skies could not have found a more worthy choice, to convey an idea of celestial virtue to mortal man. They proceeded to the altar. The emotions of the mother were still stronger than those of the daughter, for they were mingled with those secret apprehensions, which all who are acquainted with human life are accustomed to feel, when they are engaged in any important mea.

sure. The prospects of Lucilia were solely brightened with hope; the charms of youth and infancy were blended together; joy and love dimpled her cheeks.

On her return from the altar, the timid virgin reclined upon the arm of Oswald; she fondly implored his protection. Oswald gazed at her with tenderness and concern; he seemed to be conscious of some fiend lurking at the bottom of his heart inimical to the happiness of Lucilia, against whom he was resolved to protect her.

On their return to the castle, Lady Edgermond said to her son-in-law: "My mind is now perfectly at ease: the happiness of Lucilia is committed to your guardianship; the period of my existence is so short, that I am happy in having found a representative. Lord Nelvil was deeply affected by these words; he pondered with much solicitude on the task he had to

perform. A few days had already elapsed, and the modest Lucilia had scarcely resolution enough to meet the kind looks of her spouse, or to unbosom her secrets to him, when some unhappy occurrences intervened which disturbed their union: it had commenced with brighter prospects.

CHAPTER II.

MR. DICKSON came to pay a visit to the newly married couple, and made an apology for not having been present at the wedding, saying that he had been long indisposed, owing to a contusion from a violent fall. Being asked the particulars of his fall, he said, that he had been rescued by one of the most beautiful women in the world. Oswald was at that very instant engaged in a game at shuttlecock with Lucilia.

She was very expert at this game ; Oswald was gazing at her, and did not pay any attention to the discourse of Mr. Dickson, upon which the latter called out to him across the room : “ My lord, the fair stranger who rescued me has certain !

ly some knowledge of you, for she questioned me very particularly concerning your fate."

"What lady do you mean?" rejoined Lord Nelvil, busily occupied with his play. "A very charming lady, I assure you," resumed Mr. Dickson, "although her features have been much impaired by grief, and she could not speak of you without sensible emotion." These words immediately drew the attention of Lord Nelvil, who instantly quitted his amusement, and stepping aside to Mr. Dickson, he intreated him to be so good as repeat what he had said.

Lucilia, who had not understood a syllable of the conversation, obeyed the commands of her mother, who had sent for her, and left the room. Oswald being now alone with Mr. Dickson, asked him who the lady was of whom he had been speaking.

“ I have no knowledge of her,” returned the other, “ her pronounciation made me suppose her to be an English lady ; but I have seldom found such a polite lady amongst our women, or one so conversible. She paid as much attention to me, a superannuated invalid, as if she had been my daughter, and all the time I conversed with her I did not once think about the contusions I had received. But, my dear Oswald, do you still continue to act the same faithless character in England as formerly during your residence in Italy : for my guardian angel turned pale and trembled when she pronounced your name.” “ Good God ! who is she ? An Englishwoman did you say ? ” “ Yes, undoubtedly she is,” returned Mr. Dickson, “ you know that foreign ladies never pronounce our language without a peculiar accent. But as to her figure, by heavens ! it was the most animated one I ever beheld, although pale and emaciated so as to excite my compassion.” “ This des-

cription does not appear applicable to Corinna, that paragon of beauty," said Oswald to himself; "but perhaps she may have suffered much from anxiety, if she is come over to England, and has not found the person whom she came in quest of." These apprehensions disturbed the mind of Oswald, and he prosecuted his interrogatories with much solicitude.

Mr. Dickson persisted in saying that the address of the stranger was so elegant and graceful, that he had never remarked the like in any other woman; that a divine benevolence animated all her features, but that she seemed languid and dejected.

"This was not the case with Corinna," said Lord Nelvil to himself, "but here again she may have been altered by her anxiety." "Of what colour are her eyes and hair?" said Lord Nelvil. "Of the most charming black imaginable." Lord

Nelvil turned pale. “Pray is she livel in conversation?” “No,” pursued Mr Dickson, “she only spoke a few words now and then by way of question and answer; but these few words were pronounced with much elegance.—” He was going to continue the conversation, when Lady Edgermond and Lucilia entered: he was silent, and Lord Nelvil desisted from further interrogatories, but was very thoughtful and went out to indulge his reflections, until he had an opportunity of finding Mr. Dickson alone.

Lady Edgermond who had remarked his melancholy, desired Lucilia to enquire of Mr. Dickson, whether any thing had passed in the course of their conversation to cause her son-in-law this uneasiness: the latter frankly related what he had just said. Lady Edgermond instantly guessed the truth, and trembled with apprehension for the pain which Oswald must feel, if he knew for a certainty that Corinna

was come to Scotland in quest of him, and suspecting that he would question Mr. Dickson again on this subject, she told him what reply he ought to make in order to dissipate the suspicions of Lord Nelvil. In a second conversation Mr. Dickson did not indeed augment his uneasiness on the subject, but he also could not obviate his suspicions, and Oswald's first thought was to inquire of his domestic, whether all the letters he had brought him about three weeks ago came by the mail, and if he did not remember to have received any through another channel.

The domestic assured him to the contrary, but as he was quitting the room, he turned back and said to Lord Nelvil: "It strikes me that on the day of the ball, a blind man gave me a letter for your lordship; but I suppose that was only to implore your charity." "How! a blind man!" returned Oswald, "I never received a letter from such a person: can you

find the man again ?” “ That I can easily do, returned the domestic, he lives in this village.” “ Go and seek him,” said Lord Nelvil ; and not having patience to wait until the arrival of the blind man, he went out and met him at the corner of the avenue.

“ Friend,” said he to the blind man, “ you had a letter for me on the day of the ball, pray who gave it you ? Do you suppose it was a woman ?” “ Yes, my lord, for she had a very sweet voice in spite of her tears ; and I heard her distinctly weeping.”

“ Was she weeping ?” returned Oswald, “ and pray what did she say to you ?” “ She said,” rejoined the other, “ my good father, you must give this letter to Oswald’s domestic ; but then, recollecting herself, she added ; to Lord Nelvil.”

“ O my Corinna !” exclaimed Oswald.

and sunk into the old man's arms, ready to faint away.

"My Lord," pursued the blind man, "I was seated at the foot of a tree, when she sent me on this errand. I was desirous to execute her orders immediately ; but as I found some difficulty in rising, owing to my age, she condescended to assist me herself, gave me more money than I have had for a long time ; and I could feel her hand tremble whilst she was supporting me, just as your's does at present, my Lord."

That is sufficient for me, said Lord Nelvil ; here, my worthy friend, is some money for you ; pray for us both. Hereupon he retired.

From this very instant, his mind was agitated with anxiety ; he caused a strict search to be made after her ; but all in vain ; yet he could not conceive it.

possible, that Corinna should come to Scotland, without requesting an interview. He perplexed himself with a thousand strange conceits, concerning the motives of her conduct, and his affliction was so great, that in spite of his efforts to conceal it, it was impossible for Lady Egermond not to perceive it, nay even Lucilia remarked the unhappy state of his mind: she herself fell into a deep melancholy, and a solemn silence prevailed within their mansion. About this time Lord Nelvil wrote his first letter to the Prince Castel-Forte, which the latter did not think proper to communicate to Corinna, and which would certainly have greatly affected her, as it expressed the uneasiness of his soul.

The Count d'Erfeuil returned from Plymouth, to which place he had conducted Corinna, before the reply of the Prince of Castel-Forte to Lord Nelvil's letter came to hand: he was unwilling

to acquaint Lord Nelvil with all that he knew concerning Corinna, and yet he was much dissatisfied that his friends should be ignorant that he was in possession of an important secret ; and that he had discretion enough to be silent. His occasional hints, to which Lord Nelvil did not at first attend, at length excited his curiosity, when he found that Corinna was in some measure concerned ; he then became very inquisitive, but the Count d'Erfeuil evaded his importunity with dexterity, being satisfied with having raised his curiosity. At length, however, Oswald, artfully sifted the whole story of Corinna, owing to the secret satisfaction which the Count d'Erfeuil had in recounting all that he had done for her, her grateful acknowledgments of his services, and the miserable, piteous plight in which he had found her ; he did not even observe, during the course of his narrative, what effect it had upon the mind of Lord Nelvil, having no

no other object in view all this time than, according to an English phrase, to be the hero of his own story. When the Count had concluded his narrative, he sincerely repented the mischief he had done.

Oswald had hitherto kept within the bounds of moderation, but now he became frantic with grief: he accused himself as the most barbarous and perfidious of men; he called to mind the resignation, attachment and tenderness of Corinna, nay even her generosity, in that very instant when she thought him most culpable; and then he contrasted the cruelty and indifference with which he had repaid her. He constantly said within himself, that he should never be beloved by any one with such constancy, and that he should some time or other suffer for the cruelty he had shewn her: he was desirous to set out for Italy, in order to obtain a sight of her for one day, or for an hour only; but Rome and Florence were already in the

possession of the French : his regiment was going to embark ; he could not withdraw with credit ; he could not afflict his own wife, heap wrong upon wrong and grief upon grief. He now longed for the dangers of war, and this gave him consolation. In this state of mind he wrote his second letter to the Prince of Castel-Forte, which the latter resolved not to communicate to Corinna. The answers of the friend of Corinna depicted her in a state of melancholy and resignation, and as he was haughty, and secretly enamoured with her, he rather endeavoured to soften than aggravate her condition.

Lord Nelvil, therefore, thought it his duty no longer to harrass her with his bootless sorrow, after having made her so unhappy by his love, and he set out for the Islands with a sentiment of grief and remorse which made his life miserable.

CHAPTER III.

LUCILIA was disconsolate on account of the absence of Oswald ; but the sullen silence he had observed towards her, in the last period of their domestic life, had confirmed her natural timidity so much, that she had not the resolution to acquaint him with her being in a state of pregnancy : He was informed of this circumstance at the Islands by a letter from Lady Edgermond, from whom her daughter had hitherto kept it a secret.

Lord Nelvil regarded the last farewell of Lucilia as very cold ; he could not discern the inward state of her soul, and contrasting her silent sorrow with the eloquent grief of Corinna, when he parted from her at Venice, he instantly con-

cluded that Lucilia's passion was not ardent. However, during his four years absence, she did not enjoy one single day of happiness. Nay, even the birth of her daughter could not make her forget the perils which her husband encountered.

This uneasiness was augmented by a fresh affliction ; she discovered, by degrees, the story of Corinna, and her connexion with Lord Nelvil.

The Count d'Erfeuil, who resided in Scotland nearly one year, and paid frequent visits to Lucilia and her mother, had not disclosed the secret of the voyage of Corinna to England, but he threw out so many hints on this subject, he found it so difficult to evade a topic which was peculiarly interesting to Lucilia, when their conversation was dull, that she became at length mistress of the whole secret.

Notwithstanding her simplicity, she was artful enough to stimulate the loquacity of the Count d'Erfeuil ; for that was no hard matter.

Lady Edgermond, whose illness became every day more alarming, easily foresaw the pains her daughter would take to learn the cause which occasioned her so much grief ; but when she saw her so melancholy, she requested her to communicate the cause of her sorrow.

Lady Egermond reprobated in the severest terms the voyage of Corinna to England. Lucilia viewed the subject in a different light. She was jealous of Corinna, and dissatisfied with Oswald, who had behaved in such a cruel manner towards a woman by whom he had been so much beloved ; and she thought that merely for her own sake, she ought to be jealous of a man who had sacrificed the happiness of another woman.

She had always felt a tender sympathy and affection for her sister, which greatly augmented the pity with which her bosom glowed at present ; and far from being flattered by the preference which Oswald had given her, she was constantly haunted with the idea that he had only chosen her, because her circumstances were better than those of Corinna ; she now recollected his hesitation before their wedding, his melancholy a few days afterwards ; and every particular seemed to confirm her notion that she was not beloved by her husband. Lady Edgermond might have been very serviceable to her in this state of mind, had she endeavoured to soothe her ; but being a woman of a rigid temper, who would listen to nothing but duty and absolute submission, she fulminated her anathemas against every deviation from this path.

She never once thought of making converts by forbearance, and imagined, on

the contrary, that the only means of exciting repentance, was to shew resentment: she sympathised too much in the uneasiness of Lucilia, was too much distracted by the idea that such a charming creature was undervalued by her husband, and far from consulting her interest, or persuading her that she was better beloved than she imagined, she confirmed her apprehensions, in order to inflame her jealous pride.

Lucilia, more wise and gentle than her mother, did not scrupulously adhere to the advice she gave her, although she preserved some appearance of obedience; for her letters to Lord Nelvil were much less affectionate than her real sentiments.

In the mean time Oswald distinguished himself in the war by his military prowess; his life was a thousand times endangered, not only by his enthusiastic conceptions

of honour, but also by his contempt of danger. . It was observable that perilous adventures were an amusement for him, that he appeared most lively, gay, and happy in the day of battle ; his features brightened with joy, when the din of war commenced, and this was the only moment when his heart was lightened of that burden, which scarcely suffered him to breathe. Beloved by his soldiers, admired by his comrades, he appeared to lead a pleasant life, which without conferring happiness upon him, rendered him less sensible to the past and to the future. He received letters from his wife, which he thought frigid, but which became familiar by habit.

The image of Corinna frequently appeared to him in the delightful nights of the tropical climes, where we form such grand conceptions of nature and of its Author ; but as his life was constantly in danger from the climate and the war, he

thought himself much less culpable, on the brink of the grave; we are easily induced to pardon our enemies, when death affrights them; we feel likewise a sort of indulgence for ourselves in a similar situation. Lord Nelvil only thought of the tears of Corinna, when she should learn that he was no more. He forgot those she had shed for her past wrongs.

In the midst of those dangers which so often suggest reflection on the uncertainty of human life, his thoughts were more occupied with Corinna than with Lucilia; they had so frequently conversed together on the subject of death, they had so often investigated the most serious questions, that he thought he ought still to hold converse with Corinna, when his mind was occupied with those grand ideas which the spectacle of war, and of perils suggests. When alone, he addressed himself to her, although he had reason to suppose her incensed against him. He

imagined that they had still a communion together, in spite of absence, nay even in spite of infidelity ; whereas the gentle Lucilia, to whom he did not suppose he had given cause of offence, never once occurred to his mind, except as a person worthy of his protection, but who ought never to be disturbed with melancholy or profound reflections. The forces acting under the orders of Lord Nelvil were now recalled to England ; he set out on his return : the tranquillity of his voyage was far less agreeable to him, than the active operations of war. He had made himself so greatly beloved by his soldiers, had inspired them with so much attachment and enthusiasm, that his predilection for a military life was renewed during the voyage. This predilection did not abate before he came on shore.

CHAPTER IV.

LORD Nelvil then set out for Lady Edgermond's estate in Northumberland, in order to renew his acquaintance with his family, from which he had been separated four years. Lucilia presented to him her daughter, now upwards of three years old, with as much timidity as a consciousness of guilt could have occasioned. The child resembled Corinna: the imagination of Lucilia had frequently dwelt on her sister during her pregnancy, and Julietta, for that was her name, had the hair and eyes of Corinna. Lord Nelvil remarked it with emotion, took her in his arms, and pressed her tenderly to his bosom. Lucilia ascribed this action entirely to the fond recollection of Corinna,

and from that moment she no longer received unalloyed pleasure from the affection which Lord Nelvil testified for Julietta.

Lucilia's charms were heightened during the period of his absence; she was now near twenty. Her beauty had assumed an imposing character, and inspired Lord Nelvil with respect. Lady Edgermond was unable to leave her bed, and her situation made her extremely peevish and morose. She nevertheless rejoiced at the return of Lord Nelvil, for she had been extremely afflicted by the apprehension of dying in his absence, and leaving her daughter unprotected in the world. Lord Nelvil was so accustomed to an active life, that he found it exceedingly irksome to stay the whole day in the chamber of his mother-in-law, who admitted nobody but him and her daughter. Lucilia was still tenderly attached to Lord Nelvil; but she had the misfor-

tune to imagine that she was not beloved by him, and concealed from him, through pride, what she knew concerning his sentiments for Corinna, and the jealousy which they occasioned in her bosom. This restraint increased her habitual reserve, and rendered her more cold and distant than she naturally was. When her husband gave her any advice respecting the charms which she might give to conversation; by taking a stronger interest in it; she fancied she could trace in this advice, a recollection of Corinna; and instead of profiting by it, she was offended. Lucilia possessed great mildness of temper; but her mother had encouraged her to form positive ideas on every subject; and when Lord Nelvil extolled the pleasures of the imagination, and the charms of the fine arts, she ascribed his praises to the recollection of Italy, and sought the first occasion to damp Lord Nelvil's enthusiasm, because she imagined that Corinna was the only cause of it.

Had she been in a different humour, she would have treasured up her husband's words with care, in order to study all the means of pleasing him.

Lady Edgermond, whose failings were increased by her illness, manifested an increasing antipathy against every deviation from the monotony and habitual routine of her life. She considered every thing as mischievous, and her imagination, irritated by pain, was alarmed at every noise, moral as well as physical. She was desirous to reduce existence within the narrowest possible limits, perhaps that she might not so deeply regret what she was about to leave; but as no one acknowledges the private motive of his opinions, she supported them by the general principles of an exaggerated morality. She was continually stripping life of its charms, by considering every pleasure as criminal, and opposing on the score of duty any employment of time

which differed from that of the preceding day. Lucilia, who though extremely dutiful to her mother, possessed more understanding and more flexibility of character than she, would have joined her husband in mildly combating the gradually increasing austerity and moroseness of Lady Edgermond, had not the latter persuaded her that she had no other motive for this conduct, than to oppose Lord Nelvil's fondness for living in Italy. "It is necessary," said she, "to endeavour continually, by the power of duty, to prevent the possible revival of this unfortunate inclination." Lord Nelvil had certainly a high respect for moral duty, his views of it were more enlarged than those of Lady Edgermond. He loved to ascend to its source; he considered it in perfect harmony with our genuine propensities, and thought that it did not require of us continual sacrifices and struggles. In short, virtue, in his opinion, instead of being the torment of life, con-

tributes so powerfully to permanent happiness, that it may be considered as a sort of fore-knowledge conferred in this world upon man.

Sometimes Oswald, in explaining his ideas, could not resist the pleasure of employing Corinna's expressions; he heard himself with pleasure when he borrowed her language. Lady Edgermond was angry whenever he indulged himself in that manner of thinking or expressing himself: new ideas are disagreeable to aged people; they love to persuade themselves that the world has become worse since they were young. Lucilia, as it were by intuition, readily comprehended, from the great vehemence with which Lord Nelvil delivered his sentiments, that he still retained his former affection for Corinna; she cast her eyes downwards in order to conceal from her husband, those ideas that were uppermost in her mind; on the other hand, taking it for granted,

that she was acquainted with all the circumstances of his connexion with Corinna, he attributed the obstinate silence of his wife, after the warm rhapsody he had pronounced, to her callous disposition. Not knowing where to find a congenial soul to whom he might unbosom himself, his mind was harrowed up by a recollection of former griefs; and he fell into a deep melancholy. He wrote to Prince Castel-Forte to send him some account of Corinna. His letter did not come to hand on account of the war. His health was extremely injured by the English climate, and the physicians constantly warned him to go and spend the winter in Italy, otherwise his breast would be again disordered; but this was impracticable, because peace had not been concluded between France and England. He once mentioned the advice of the physicians, and the impediments which rendered it inadmissible, in the presence of his wife and mother-in-law.

“In the event of a peace, my Lord,” said Lady Edgermond, “I suppose you would not even allow yourself to think of returning to Italy.” “My Lord would do well to go there,” rejoined Lucilia, “if his health requires it.” Lord Nelvil took this sentiment kindly, and expressed his gratitude to Lucilia in a handsome manner; but even his warm acknowledgments hurt her feelings; she thought she could discover a secret design to prepare her mind for the journey.

Peace was concluded in spring, and the voyage to Italy became practicable. Whenever Lord Nelvil suffered any uneasy reflections to escape him on the subject of ill health, Lucilia was distracted by conjugal sympathy and by an apprehension lest Lord Nelvil meant to insinuate the propriety of his passing the winter in Italy, and whilst her affection prompted her to represent the illness of her husband in an alarming light, her jealousy on the

other hand, which was derived from this affection, persuaded her to invent arguments in order to invalidate what the physicians alledged concerning the dangerous consequences of his stay in England. Lord Nelvil ascribed this conduct of Lucilia to her apathy and egotism, and they gave one another mutual cause of offence, because they were not in a disposition to make a frank disclosure of their sentiments.

At length Lady Edgermond's disorder became so alarming, that it was the sole topic of conversation between Lucilia and Lord Nelvil; the poor lady lost her faculty of speech a month before her death; they could not otherwise interpret her sentiments than by her tears or by an affectionate squeeze of the hand; Lucilia was quite outrageous with grief; Lord Nelvil was deeply affected, and watched every night by her bed-side; but this being the month of November, he greatly impaired

his health by his assiduous attention to his mother-in-law.

This testimony of affection from her son-in-law was highly gratifying to Lady Edgermond. The imperfections of her character gradually disappeared, in proportion as her lamentable condition rendered them excusable, so effectually are the passions of our soul calmed by the approach of death ; and our imperfections arise from these passions. On the night of her departure, she took the hand of Lucilia and that of Lord Nelvil, and joining them together, she pressed them to her breast ; she then raised her eyes towards Heaven, and did not appear to regret her loss of speech, which could not have expressed more than her present look and gesture. A few minutes afterwards she expired.

Lord Nelvil, who had made an extraordinary exertion to nurse his mother-in-

law, was seized with a dangerous illness; and the unfortunate Lucilia, oppressed with grief, was overwhelmed with another formidable affliction. It appears that Lord Nelvil in his delirious ravings frequently mentioned the name of Corinna and of Italy. In his delirium he frequently called for sun, a southern climate, and a warmer air; when he was shivering with feverish cold, he used to complain that it was so cold in this northern climate, that his blood was never warm. When he became sensible again, he was astonished to find that Lucilia had got every thing in readiness for his journey to Italy. She alledged the advice of the physicians as a reason for her conduct. "By your leave," added she, "my daughter and I will accompany you; a child ought never to be banished from the society of her father and mother." "True," said Lord Nelvil, "we ought not to separate; but pray, my dear, does not this journey cause you some uneasiness? Speak the word, and I will

abandon the whole scheme." "No," replied Lucilia, "that is not the cause of my uneasiness." Lord Nelvil looked at her and took her by the hand. She was on the point of explaining herself more clearly; but recollecting her mother's advice, who had admonished her never to confess to Lord Nelvil the jealousy with which she was agitated, she suddenly stopt short, and made the following answer: "Believe me, my Lord, my first care is the recovery of your health." "I think you have a sister in Italy;" resumed Lord Nelvil.—"I know that very well," returned Lucilia; "have you lately heard any news of her?" "No," replied Lord Nelvil, "since I set out for America, I don't know what is become of her." "Well then, my Lord," said Lucilia, "we shall know when we come to Italy." "Is she still dear to you?" said Oswald. "Certainly, my Lord," replied Lucilia, "I have never forgotten her kindness to me in my infancy." "Oh! we ought never to for-

get any thing," said Lord Nelvil with a sigh. Here their conversation ended and both were silent.

Oswald did not go to Italy with a design of renewing his tender correspondence with Corinna, his delicacy would not suffer such an idea to prevail ; but in case he should not recover from his pectoral complaint, he thought it would be fortunate for him to die in Italy, if he could bid Corinna a last farewell and obtain her pardon. He did not imagine that Lucilia was acquainted with the passion he had conceived for her sister ; still less did he suspect that in his delirium he had betrayed that uneasiness with which he was still tormented. He did not do justice to the mental faculties of his wife, because her's were not cultivated, and she exercised them rather in divining the thoughts of others, than in amusing others by communicating her own. Oswald had ever been accustomed to regard her in the light

of a handsome lady, devoid of sensibility, who was conscientious in the performance of her duties, and loved him as much as her temper would permit; but he was a stranger to the delicate feelings of Lucilia; she constantly strove to conceal them. Nay her pride made her act a double part in an affair which afflicted her; but being perfectly happy in her present situation, she would have condemned herself for discovering a violent affection even for her husband. She conceived that all the rapturous expressions of sentiment were incompatible with modesty, and as she was susceptible of such sentiments, her education, by enjoining her dissimulation, had made her pensive and serious. She had been instructed not to communicate her feelings, but she did not think proper to communicate any thing else.

CHAPTER V.

LORD Nelvil deprecated those unpleasant ideas which France would recall to his mind ; he therefore travelled through this country with expedition : for as Lucilia had no inclination of her own, he was at liberty to consult his own taste. They arrived at the foot of those mountains which separate Dauphiny from Savoy, and traversed on foot a path which is called the flinty way : it was a road cut through a rock ; the entrance of which resembles the mouth of a tremendous cave ; it is obscure throughout, even on a fine summer's day. It was now about the commencement of December ; there had been no fall of snow, but autumn, the emblem of drooping vegetation, was just expiring, and dreary winter began to usurp its place.

The whole path was strewed with withered foliage, collected there by the winds ; for no trees flourish in this rocky soil, and amidst these wild scenes of nature, no traces of vegetation were perceptible.

The aspect of the mountains pleased Lord Nelvil ; on the level surface of the plains, nature appears only desirous to provide for the ease and sustenance of man ; but amidst these romantic landscapes we discern the effigy of a divine genius, and of an almighty power. But man is become familiar with every thing ; he has hewn roads through the mountains, and made the declivity of precipices passable. To him nothing is unattainable, save only the knowledge of his own mysterious nature.

On entering the territory of Maurienne the asperity of winter began to augment every instant. You would suppose that you were advancing towards the inhospitable

pitable climes of the north, when you approach Mount Cenis: Lucilia, who had never travelled, was terrified at the sight of those glaciers which are scarcely accessible to the foot of animals. She concealed her apprehensions from Oswald, but frequently condemned herself for having conducted her little daughter to this spot; she often doubted whether her conduct was conformable to the precepts of morality, and whether her affection for her child, and the idea of appearing more amiable in the eyes of Oswald by the sight of this pledge of their mutual affection, had not made her insensible to the perils of such a tedious journey. Lucilia was a very timid female, constantly perplexing herself with scruples touching her own conduct.

Our delicacy always keeps pace with our virtue and alarms our conscience; Lucilia had no other resource than her piety and devotion.

As they drew nigh to Mount Cenis, the whole aspect of nature appeared to assume a more terrific form ; the ground, already surfeited with snow, was covered with fresh flakes ; you would suppose yourself ingulphed in those subterraneous fields of ice so well depicted by Dante. All the productions of nature presented one dull monotonous perspective, from the extremity of the precipices to the summit of the mountains ; all the diversified shades of vegetation wore the same livery ; the rivers still urged their limpid course at the foot of the mountains, but the pines arrayed in white robes reflected their own image in the watery expanse like unto the shadowy semblance of trees.

Oswald and Lucilia silently contemplated this spectacle ; silence seems congenial to this icy region, for here every thing is congealed. All of a sudden they espied in a spacious field of snow, a procession of men apparelled in black, who

were conveying a corpse to the church. These priests, the only beings that were descried amidst these icy and desolate regions, moved slowly onwards, but the asperity of the weather would have quickened their pace, had it not been retarded by meditations on death. The mournful aspect of nature and of man, of vegetation and of life; these two liveries of white and of black which alone saluted the eye of the beholder and exhibited a striking contrast, filled the soul with dismay. Lucilia muttered in a low voice:—"What a dire omen is this!" "Lucilia," exclaimed Oswald, "believe me it does not concern you." Alas! said he within himself, it was not with such inauspicious omens, that I made my first journey to Italy along with Corinna; what is become of her now? And are all these mournful objects around me the harbingers of what I am going to suffer? Lucilia was overwhelmed with wistful solicitude. Oswald was not alarmed with such like apprehensions,

which are foreign to the dispositions of a man, and more especially to one of such an intrepid character. Lucilia ascribed that circumstance to indifference which solely proceeded from his not suspecting any cause of fear. Every thing conspired to augment the fears of Lucilia.

The vulgar take a sort of dilight in magnifying danger; herein the strength of their imagination chiefly consists: they are also pleased with the terrors they excite in the minds of women, when they recount their idle stories. When you are going to ascend Mount Cenis during the winter season, travellers and innkeepers are constantly recounting to you wonderful stories concerning the passage of the great mountain as they call it; and you would swear they were speaking about some incredible monster; the guardian of those vallies, which conduct to the land of promise. They examine the weather in order to know whether they have any

thing to fear, and when they apprehend a whirlwind, as they call it, strangers are advised not to encounter the dangers of the mountain. This whirlwind is generally announced by a white cloud, which overspreads the heavens like a sheet, and in a few hours the whole horizon is darkened. Lucilia had privately informed herself about every thing without the knowledge of Lord Nelvil; he never once dreamt of these terrors, and gave himself up wholly to the reflexions which his return to Italy inspired.

Lucilia, who was more concerned about the object of the journey, than about the journey itself, regarded every thing in an unfavourable light, and tacitly reproached Lord Nelvil, for his tranquillity on her and her daughter's account. On the morning when they were preparing to ascend Mount Cenis, some peasants came to Lucilia to inform her that the weather indicated a whirlwind.

But the guides, who were appointed to convey her and her daughter, assured them that they had nothing to apprehend. Lucilia looked wistfully at Lord Nelvil; she saw that he ridiculed their boding fears, and taking umbrage at his fortitude, she said abruptly, that she would instantly set out. Oswald did not perceive the cause of her sudden departure, and followed the litter on horseback, on which his wife and daughter were carried. They soon gained the summit; but when they had reached the middle of the plain at the top of the mountain, a dreadful hurricane arose. Their guides were bewildered in a whirlwind of snow, and Lucilia frequently lost sight of Oswald, who was enveloped in a tempest of snow. Those good monks who dedicate their lives to the welfare of travellers on the summit of the Alps, now began to sound the alarum bells, and although this signal was a token of the compassion of these benevolent hermits, the very sound inspired melancholy

ideas, and the hollow peals were not so much the harbinger of succour as of dismay.

Lucilia was in hopes that Oswald would halt at the convent, and pass the night there; but as she did not communicate her wishes, he thought it better to prosecute his journey before sunset. The guides, with much apparent uneasiness, questioned Lucilia whether they might attempt a descent. "Certainly," said she, "since it is my lord's pleasure."

Lucilia ought to have expressed her fears, because her daughter was along with her; but when we love, and imagine that we are not beloved in return, we take offence at every thing, and every moment of our lives brings fresh cause of grief and humiliation. Oswald remained on horse-back, although this was the most dangerous mode of descent, but he thought this the surest way not to lose sight of his wife and daughter.

At the instant when Lucilia beheld from the summit of the mountain the path by which she was to descend, which was so steep, that it appeared like a precipice, although the yawning gulphs on either side were far more tremendous, then she clasped her daughter in her arms, with heartfelt emotion. Oswald observing this, alighted, and went to assist the chairmen in their office.

Oswald did this in such an obliging manner, that Lucilia beholding him wholly taken up with her and Julietta, could not forbear shedding tears; but at that very instant there arose such a dreadful gust of wind, that their guides instantly knelt down and exclaimed, "Lord have mercy upon us!" Then Lucilia summoning her whole resolution to her aid, and raising herself upon the litter, presented Julietta to Lord Nelvil, saying: "My dear, take care of your daughter." Oswald caught her in his arms and said to Lucilia:

“ You may also alight, I can carry you both.” “ No,” rejoined Lucilia, “ only rescue your daughter.” “ How ! rescue her !” answered Lord Nelvil, “ is there any danger ?” and then turning towards the guides : “ Villains !” he exclaimed, “ why did not you give me timely notice ?” “ They acquainted me beforehand with this danger,” said Lucilia. “ And pray why did you conceal it from me,” said Lord Nelvil, “ what have I done to deserve this cruel reserve ?” In uttering this ejaculation, he wrapped his cloak round his daughter, and cast his eye with much solicitude upon the ground ; but Heaven, the guardian of Lucilia, sent a ray of light, which beamed through the clouds, made the tempest subside, and opened a prospect of the fertile plains of Piedmont. In the course of an hour the whole company arrived, without any mishap, at Novalaise, the first Italian town beyond Mount Cenis.

On entering the inn, Lucilia took her daughter in her arms, ran up stairs into a private room, fell upon her knees and returned thanks to God for deliverance. Whilst she was at her prayers, Oswald stood in a pensive posture resting his elbow on the chimney-piece, he took her by the hand and said: "Were you really alarmed, Lucilia?" "Yes, my dear," said she. "Why then," said he, "did you prosecute your journey?" "You seemed impatient to be gone," replied Lucilia. "Don't you know," returned Lord Nelvil, "that I only dread danger and fatigue on your account?" "It is for Julietta's sake we ought to be alarmed," said Lucilia. She took the child on her knees to warm her by the fire, tying up her beautiful black hair, which the wet and snow had disordered. Then both mother and daughter appeared charming, and Oswald regarded them tenderly; but silence ensued, and ended a conversation which might have led to a satisfactory explanation.

They arrived at Turin; this year the winter was very severe: the spacious apartments of Italy appear peculiarly adapted for the genial warmth of the sunbeams; they were now impregnated with cold. The tenants of these immense vaults appear very diminutive. They are very delightful in the summer season, being airy, but in winter they are gloomy and desolate, and their inhabitants appear like pigmies in the habitations of giants.

News had just arrived of the death of Alfieri, and this was a signal for a general mourning to every Italian, who was proud of his native country! Lord Nelvil beheld every where the vestiges of sorrow; he was now a stranger to those sensations which Italy had formerly excited in his breast. The absence of her whom he had formerly adored, despoiled nature and art of their beauty. At Turin he made inquiries after Corinna; he was told, that for the last five years she had published nothing, and lived in solitude; but he was informed that she was at Florence. He

resolved to go there, not to make any stay, or give any cause of offence to Lucilia, but to inquire into the cause why the journey of Corinna to Scotland had been concealed from him.

On his journey over the plains of Lombardy, Oswald exclaimed: "What a charming scene it was, when the elms were covered with foliage, and the green vines clasped each other in a fond embrace! Lucilia said to herself; it was a charming time when Corinna was in his company. A damp fog, as is often the case in these plains intersected by such a number of rivers, beclouded the prospect of the country. At night they heard torrents of rain resembling the general deluge, descending upon the roofs of the inns. The water penetrates into the houses, and every where pursues you with the activity of fire. Lucilia in vain sought the charms of Italy: they were hid as it were from her observation, and from that of Oswald.

CHAPTER VI.

OSWALD, since he entered Italy, had not spoken a word of Italian: the language seemed to produce disagreeable sensations, and he avoided hearing as well as speaking it. The same night that Lady Nelvil and he arrived at the inn at Milan, they heard a knock at the door, and beheld a Roman, of a very dark complexion, strongly marked, but yet without any real physiognomy, enter their apartment. His features were created for expression, but they wanted the soul which imparts it; his countenance exhibited a continued smile of good nature, and a look that would fain have been poetical. He began while at the door to repeat some verses in praise of the mother, the

child, and the husband—such praise as would apply to every mother, child, and husband in the world, and the exaggeration of which exceeded every thing, as if words and truth were not intended to have any connection with each other. The Roman, however, employed these harmonious sounds, which have so many charms in the Italian ; he declaimed with an energy which made the insignificance of what he said still more striking. Nothing could be more painful to Oswald, than thus to hear the language which he loved for the first time after so long an interval, than thus to see his recollections burlesqued, and to feel an impression of grief renewed by a ludicrous object. Lucilia perceiving the cruel situation of Oswald's mind, desired the *improvisatore* to cease his harangue, but it was impossible to make him hear her. He paced the chamber at a great rate, with continual exclamations and gestures, and paying not the least attention to the disgust which he

excited in his hearers. His motion was like that of a machine, which does not stop till the expiration of a certain time. That moment at length arrived, and Lady Nelvil immediately dismissed him.

When he was gone, Oswald said : “ It is so easy to burlesque the language of poetry in Italy, that it ought to be forbidden to all those who are not worthy to speak it.” “ It is true,” replied Lucilia, perhaps rather too drily, “ it is true that it must be disagreeable to be reminded of what we admire by what we have just heard.” — This expression vexed Lord Nelvil. “ So far from it,” said he, “ I think such a contrast shews to advantage the power of genius. It was this same language, so miserably disgraced, that was transformed into celestial poesy, when Corinna—when your sister,” added he, with affectation, “ made use of it to express her thoughts.” Lucilia was thunderstruck by these words : Oswald had

never pronounced Corinna's name during the whole journey, and still less had he made use of the expression, *your sister*, which seemed intended as a reproach. She was nearly suffocated with emotion, and had she indulged it, perhaps that moment would have been the happiest of her life; but she suppressed it, and the restraint which subsisted between them was thus rendered the more painful.

The next day the sun shone out, and notwithstanding the preceding disagreeable weather, he appeared brilliant and joyful, as an exile returning to his country. Lucilia and Lord Nelvil availed themselves of this opportunity, to visit the cathedral of Milan, the master-piece of Gothic architecture in Italy, as St. Peter's is of modern architecture. This church, built in the form of a cross, is a beautiful image of grief towering above the gay and opulent city of Milan. On ascending to the top of the steeple, you

are astonished at the scrupulous minuteness of the workmanship. The whole edifice from top to bottom is loaded with decorations, sculpture, and carving, as though it were merely a little ornamental piece of furniture. What patience and time must have been acquired for the completion of such a work ! Perseverance in the same object was formerly transmitted from generation to generation, and mankind, steady in their ideas, erected monuments durable as they. A Gothic church produces dispositions highly religious. Horace Walpole has observed, that the Popes devoted the riches they acquired, by the devotion which Gothic churches excited, to the erection of temples in the modern style. The light which passes through coloured windows, the singular forms of the architecture, in a word, the whole appearance of the church is a silent image of that mystery of infinity which we feel within us, without ever being able to get rid of, or to comprehend it.

Lucilia and Lord Nelvil left Milan, one day when the ground was covered with snow, and nothing can be more melancholy than snow in Italy. The inhabitants of that country are not accustomed to behold all nature under one uniform veil of frost or snow; all the Italians lament bad weather as they would a public calamity. Oswald cherished an attachment for Italy, which was not gratified in this tour with Lucilia; winter is more disagreeable there than any where else, because the imagination is not prepared for it. Lord and Lady Nelvil visited Placentia, Parma, and Modena. The churches and palaces of those cities are too large in proportion to the number and the opulence of the inhabitants. It might be said of those places, that they are prepared for the reception of some distinguished persons who are expected, but who have merely sent before them a part of their retinue.

As if every thing was to contribute at this time, to render the tour of Italy as dismal as possible, on the morning that Lucilia and Lord Nelvil intended to cross the Taro, they found that the river had the preceding night overflowed its banks; and the inundations of these rivers which descend from the Alps and Appenines, is truly tremendous. You hear them roaring at a distance like thunder; and their current is so impetuous, that you perceive the torrents, and hear the noise which announces them almost at the same moment. It is scarcely possible to build bridges across these rivers, because they are continually changing their beds, and rise far above the level of the plain. Oswald and Lucilia found themselves all at once stopped on the banks of the river; the boats had been carried away by the current, and it was necessary to wait till the Italians, a people who are never in a hurry, had brought them to the new shore formed by the torrent. During this

interval, Lucilia walked about pensive and cold ; there was so thick a fog it was impossible to see across the river, and this spectacle rather served to recall to the mind the poetic descriptions of the shores of the Styx, than the grateful waters destined to delight the eyes of the people who live under a scorching sun. Lucilia was fearful of the effects of the severe cold upon her child, and took her into a fisherman's hut, where the fire was kindled in the middle of the room as in Russia. "Where is now your beautiful Italy?" said Lucilia smiling to Lord Nelvil. "I know not when I shall find it again," replied he sorrowfully.

On approaching Parma, and all the towns upon that road, the traveller has, at a distance, a picturesque view of the roofs, in the form of terraces, which give an oriental appearance to the cities of Italy. The churches and steeples appear to extraordinary advantage amidst

these platforms; and on returning to the north, the pointed roofs which are thus constructed as a defence against the snow, produce a very disagreeable effect. Parma still contains some master-pieces of Correggio; Lord Nelvil conducted Lucilia to a church where is seen a painting in fresco by him, called the *Madonna della Scala*. It is covered by a curtain. When this curtain was drawn, Lucilia took Julietta in her arms to shew her the picture, and at that moment the attitude of the mother and of the child happened to be nearly the same as that of the virgin and her son. The figure of Lucilia bore so much resemblance to the genuine model of modesty and grace which Correggio has painted, that Oswald alternately turned his eye from the picture to Lucilia and from Lucilia to the picture. She observed him, fixed her eyes on the ground, and the resemblance became still more striking; for Correggio was perhaps the only painter that understood the art of giving to down-

cast eyes an expression as penetrating as if they were raised towards heaven. The veil which he throws over them, diminishes neither the passion nor the intelligence of the countenance, but imparts to them the additional charm, that of a heavenly mysteriousness.

This Madonna is ready to drop from the wall, and you see the colour almost shaking in the air, as if a breath would carry it away. This circumstance gives this picture the melancholy charm which accompanies every thing that is transitory, and the spectator returns to it several times, as if to bid a tender and a last adieu to its beauty, which will soon be lost for ever.

As they were leaving the church, Oswald said to Lucilia: "In a little time this picture will not be in existence, but I shall always have its model before my eyes." These words affected Lucilia ; she

pressed Oswald's hand ; she was ready to ask him if his heart could sincerely repeat this expression of tenderness ; but when a word of Oswald's seemed cold, her pride prevented her from complaining, and when she was happy in a tender expression, she was afraid lest she should disturb the momentary happiness by endeavouring to render it more durable. Thus her heart and her understanding always found reasons for silence. She flattered herself that time, resignation and good temper would bring on a fortunate day which might dissipate all her uneasiness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE climate of Italy improved Lord Nelyil's health, but painful inquietude incessantly agitated his heart. He every where enquired for Corinna, and every where received the same answer as at Turin, that she was supposed to be at Florence, but that nobody knew any thing about her since she had ceased to see company, and had given up writing. Ah! it was not thus that the name of Corinna was formerly announced; and could he forgive himself who had destroyed her happiness and her fame?

On approaching Bologna, the traveller is struck at a distance by the view of two lofty towers, one of which in parti-

cular inclines in such a manner as to excite terror. It is of no use to know that it was so constructed, and that it has thus stood for ages, still its appearance harasses the imagination. Bologna is one of those cities in which are found a great number of well-informed persons; but the lower class of people produces a disagreeable impression. Lucilia expected to hear the harmonious language of Italy, of which so much had been told her, and the Bolognese dialect could not fail of exciting a painful surprize; there is not a harsher in the regions of the north. It was in the midst of the carnival that Oswald and Lucilia arrived at Bologna; day and night they heard cries of joy which exactly resembled shouts of anger. A population like that of the Lazaroni at Naples sleep at night under the numerous piazzas, which border the streets of Bologna; in winter they carry a little fire in an earthen vessel, eat in the streets, and persecute strangers with their incres-

sant importunities. Lucilia in vain expected to hear those melodious voices which enliven the night in the towns of Italy; cold weather silences them all, and at Bologna their place is supplied by clamours which affright those who are not accustomed to them. The jargon of the common people appears hostile, so harsh is its sound; and the manners of the populace are much ruder in some southern countries than in the regions of the north. A sedentary life heightens social order; but the sun, which allows men to live in the streets, introduces something savage into the habits of the lower classes. (11)

Oswald and Lady Nelvil could not stir a step without being assailed by a multitude of beggars, with whom Italy in general abounds. As they passed the prisons of Bologna, the bars of which are next to the street, the captives indulged in the most disgusting merriment: they

addressed the strangers in a voice of thunder, and demanded relief with low pleasantries and immoderate laughter. In a word, every thing in this place conveyed an idea of a people destitute of dignity. " 'Tis not with this familiarity," said Lucilia, " that our common people in England behave towards their superiors. Oswald, how can you like such a country ?" — " God forbid," replied Oswald, " that I should ever renounce my native land, but when you have passed the Appenines, and come to hear the Tuscan language, you will see the genuine South, you will learn to know how intelligent and animated are the people of those countries, and I am sure you will be less severe upon Italy."

Totally different are the opinions that may be formed of the Italian nation, according to circumstances. . Sometimes the unfavourable accounts that have so often been given of it correspond with your own

observations ; and at others they appear most unjust. In a country, most of whose governments were without stability, and the influence of public opinion was scarcely felt either among the higher or the lower classes ; in a country where religion inculcates the observance of exterior forms, much more than the precepts of morality, little can be said in favour of the nation in general, but still you meet with many excellent individuals. It is therefore the accidental association with persons of opposite characters that calls forth the censures or the praises of travellers ; the persons with whom they happen to be particularly acquainted, decide the opinion they form of the nation, an opinion for which no fixed basis can be found, either in the public institutions, manners or spirit.

Oswald and Lucilia went together to see the beautiful collections of pictures which are at Bologna. Oswald remained fixed for a long time before the sibyl paint-

ed by Dominichino. Lucilia remarked the interest which that piece excited in him, and seeing him lost for a considerable time in the contemplation of it, she at length ventured to go up to him, and timidly asked if the sibyl of Dominichino spoke more powerfully to his heart than the Madonna of Correggio. Oswald understood Lucilia, and was astonished at the comprehensive signification of the expression: he looked at her for some time in silence, and then said: "the sibyl has ceased to pronounce oracles; her genius, her talents, her accomplishments are fled; but the angelic figure of Correggio has lost none of its charms; and the unhappy man who rendered the one so wretched, will never betray the other." As he finished these words he retired to conceal his emotion.

BOOK XX.

CHAP. I.

FROM what had passed in the gallery of Bologna, Oswald found that Lucilia knew more than he had imagined concerning his connection with Corinna, and he at length conceived that her coldness and reserve might proceed from some secret unhappiness; nevertheless, it was he who was now afraid of coming to that explanation which Lucilia had before dreaded. After the first word she would have disclosed every thing had Lord Nelvil desired it; but it was too painful to him to converse on the subject of Corinna, a subject which could not fail to excite a powerful emotion in his bosom, with one who always produced in him a feeling of restraint, and

with whose character he was but imperfectly acquainted.

They crossed the Appenines, and found themselves in the genial climate of Italy. The sea-breeze which is so oppressive in summer, then diffused an agreeable warmth; the meadows were clothed with verdure, the autumn was scarcely over, and Nature seemed already to announce the approach of spring. In the markets were seen fruits of every kind, oranges, pomegranates, &c. They began to hear the accents of the Tuscan language; in a word, all the beauties of Italy crowded into Oswald's imagination, but they were unaccompanied by hope; nothing but the past predominated in all his impressions. The mild air of the south likewise operated on the disposition of Lucilia; she would have been more open, more animated, had she received any encouragement from Lord Nelvil; but they were both restrained by the same kind of timidity, uneasy at their

mutual situation, and yet afraid to communicate to each other the subject of their concern. Corinna, under such circumstances would soon have made herself mistress of the secret of both ; but they had each the same kind of reserve, and the greater was the resemblance in this particular, the more difficult it was for them to extricate themselves from the constraint under which they laboured.

CHAPTER II.

ON their arrival at Florence, Lord Nelvil wrote to Prince Castel-Forte, and in a few minutes the Prince waited upon him. Oswald was so affected on seeing him again, that for a considerable time he was unable to speak; at length he enquired concerning Corinna. "I have nothing but bad news for you," replied the Prince; "she is very ill, and grows weaker and weaker every day. She admits nobody but myself; the most trifling occupation is frequently oppressive to her; but yet I think her rather more easy since we heard of your arrival in Italy. I cannot conceal from you that on receiving this information her emotions were so violent, as to produce a relapse of the fever which had left her. She has not mention-

ed to me her intentions with respect to you, for I carefully avoid pronouncing your name in her presence." "Have the goodness, Sir," answered Oswald, "to shew her the letter which I wrote you nearly five years since; it contains all the details of the circumstances which prevented me from knowing of her voyage to England before I was the husband of Lucilia, and when she has read it, request permission for me to see her. I am anxious to see her, to justify my conduct if possible. Her esteem is necessary for me, though I can no longer aspire to her affections." "I shall obey your Lordship's commands," said Prince Castel-Forte, "I hope you may do her some good."

At this moment Lady Nelvil entered. Oswald introduced Prince Castel-Forte to her; she received him very coldly, and he observed her with great attention. He was doubtless struck with her beauty, for he sighed as he thought of Corinna, and

withdrew. Lord Nelvil followed him. “ Lady Nelvil is a charming woman,” said the Prince : “ What youth, what bloom ! My poor friend has lost all her beauty ; but, my lord, you cannot forget what a fine woman she also was when you first saw her.” “ No, I do not forget it,” cried Lord Nelvil, “ and I shall never forgive myself——” here he abruptly paused, unable to finish what he had intended to say. The rest of the day he was silent and pensive. Lucilia did not strive to divert his thoughts, and this vexed him. “ If Corinna had seen me melancholy,” thought he, “ Corinna would have endeavoured to cheer me.

Next morning his uneasiness led him very early to the house of Prince Castel-Forte. “ Well” said he, “ what answer did she give you ?” “ She refuses to see you,” replied the Prince. “ And what are her reasons ?” — “ I was with her yesterday, and found her in such agitation as gave

me great pain. She was walking with hasty steps to and fro in her apartment, notwithstanding her excessive weakness. A deep scarlet at times overspread for a moment her pallid cheeks. I told her that you wished to see her; after a short interval of silence she addressed me in the following words, which I shall faithfully repeat, as you require it. “ He is a man who has done me too much injury. The enemy who had thrown me into prison, who had banished, who had proscribed me, would not have inflicted so severe a wound upon my heart. I have suffered what no one ever yet suffered, from a compound of tenderness and irritation, which converted my thoughts into continual torture. I cherished as much enthusiasm as love for that cruel man. He must remember that I told him it would one day be more painful to me to cease to admire him than to cease to love him. He has destroyed the object of my adoration; he has deceived me, whether voluntarily or involuntarily

is of little consequence; he is not the man I took him to be. What has he done for me? He enjoyed for almost a year the passion with which he inspired me, and the intellectual charms which I possessed; and when he ought to have defended me, when he ought to have displayed his heart by an action, did he perform it? Can he boast of one single sacrifice, of one single act of generosity? He is now happy in the enjoyment of all the advantages that are prized by the world; as for me, I am dying, and only beg that he would suffer me to expire in peace."

"These expressions are very severe," said Oswald.—"She is irritated by her sufferings," replied Prince Castel-Forte: "I have often seen her in a milder disposition: nay, she has often taken your part against me." "You must then think me greatly to blame?" said Lord Nelvil. "Begging your pardon," replied Prince Castel-Forte, "I think you are. The

wrongs which we may commit with respect to a female do not injure us in the opinion of the world ; these frail idols adored one day may be crushed the next, without any one thinking it worth while to undertake their vindication, and for this very reason I feel for them the greater respect ; for the morality to be observed in our conduct to them is prescribed only by our own hearts. We may injure them without any inconvenience to ourselves, and yet the consequences of that injury are truly dreadful. The stroke of the assassin is punished by the laws, but a wound inflicted on a heart endowed with sensibility is only a subject of pleasantry ; of the two, therefore, the poinard would be preferable." " Believe me," replied Lord Nelvil, " I have also been very unhappy, and that is my only justification ; but though formerly Corinna would have listened to such a plea, possibly she may pay no attention to it at present. However, I am determined to write to her ; I think,

that, notwithstanding our separation, she will still hearken to the voice of her friend." "I will undertake to deliver your letter," said Prince Castel-Forte, "but let me beg of you to spare her feelings. You know not how dear you still are to her heart. Five years only render an impression still more profound when the mind has been diverted by no other idea. If you wish to know in what state she is at present, from a singular whim which my entreaties could not prevail upon her to relinquish, you will be enabled to form some idea of it."

As he finished these words, Prince Castel-Forte opened the door of his cabinet, into which Lord Nelvil followed him. He there saw the portrait of Corinna as she had appeared in the first act of *Romeo and Juliet*, on the day when he was most powerfully captivated by her. An air of confidence and happiness animated all her features. The remembrance of those joy-

ous times was revived in its fullest force in the imagination of Lord Nelvil; and when he found satisfaction in the indulgence of it, the Prince took him by the hand, and drawing a curtain of crape, which covered another picture, he shewed another resemblance of Corinna, painted the same year by her express desire, in a black dress, the costume which she had constantly worn since her return from England. Oswald all at once recollected the impression made upon him by a lady whom he met in Hyde Park in that kind of dress; but he was particularly struck by the extraordinary alteration in the figure of Corinna. She appeared pale as death, with her eyes half shut; her long eye-lashes also contributed to conceal them, and reflected a shade on her colourless cheeks. Underneath the portrait was inscribed this verse from the *Pastor Fido* :

“ A pena si può dir : questa fu rosa.”

— “ Scarcely can it be said, she *was* a rose.”

“What!” exclaimed Lord Nelvil, “and is it thus that she appears?”—“Yes,” answered Prince Castel-Forte, “and still worse during the last fortnight.” At these words Lord Nelvil rushed out of the house like a madman; the acuteness of his feelings deranged his reason.

CHAPTER III.



ON his return home, Lord Nelvil shut himself up in his apartment the whole day. Lucilia gently knocked at dinner-time at his door. He opened it and said to her: "My dear Lucilia, do not take it amiss, if I request to be alone to day." Lucilia turned to Julietta whom she held by the hand, kissed her, and retired without saying a word. Lord Nelvil shut the door, and returned to the table, on which lay the letter he was writing to Corinna. "And must I then," said he, shedding tears, "be a torment also to Lucilia? To what purpose do I live if all that love me are by me rendered unhappy?"

Letter from Lord Nelvil to Corinna.

"If you were not the most generous woman in the world, what could I have to

say to you? you may overwhelm me with reproaches, and, what is still more distressing, you may rend my heart with your affliction. Am I a monster, Corinna, that I have brought such misery on her I love? Ah! I myself suffer so severely, that I cannot think I am a perfect barbarian. You know that when I was acquainted with you, I was the prey of that grief which will accompany me to the tomb. I had no hope of happiness. Long did I struggle against the passion which you kindled within me. When it at length triumphed, my soul was still pervaded by a sentiment of melancholy, the presage of my woes. Sometimes I considered you as a gift conferred by my father, who watched in Heaven over my destiny, and was desirous that I should still be loved on earth with all the affection that he had felt for me during his life. At others, I imagined that I should disobey him if I married a stranger, and thus deviate from the line marked out by my duties and my situa-

tion. The latter sentiment prevailed when I had returned to England, and learned that my father had before-hand condemned my passion for you. Had he lived, I should have thought I possessed a right to dispute his authority on this subject, but those who are no more are incapable of hearing us; and their injunctions, unaccompanied with force, have a sacred and impressive character.

“ I found myself in the midst of my native habits and connections; I became acquainted with your sister, whom my father had intended for me, and who appeared to be exactly suited to restore my tranquillity, and to favour my plan of a regular life. I have a certain weakness in my character which causes me to dread whatever agitates my life. My mind is seduced by new hopes; but I have undergone so many afflictions, that my sickly soul is afraid of every thing that exposes it to emotions too violent, to resolutions for

which it is necessary to eradicate my recollections, and affections born with me. Nevertheless, Corinna, had I known that you were in England, I should never have been able to part from you. That admirable proof of your tenderness would have fixed my wavering heart; but why, alas! do I talk of what I would have done! should we have been happy? Am I capable of being so? Fickle as I am, can I chuse my lot, however enviable, without regretting another?

When you set me at liberty, I was irritated against you. I adopted such ideas as the generality of men would form on beholding you. I thought that a female so superior would find it easy to dispense with me. I know, Corinna, that I have wounded your heart, but it was myself only that I thought I was sacrificing. I imagined myself more disconsolate than you, and that you would forget me, while I, on the contrary, should never cease to

regret you. Circumstances at length hurried me irresistibly ; and I cannot deny that Lucilia is worthy of the sentiments which she excites in me, and of affection still more ardent. But no sooner did I hear of your voyage to England, and of the misery into which I had plunged, than my life became a continual scene of wretchedness. Four years I sought death amidst the dangers of war, certain that when you should hear I was no more, I should be justified in your opinion. You have undoubtedly to oppose to this a life of sorrow and regret, an inflexible fidelity for an ungrateful wretch who did not deserve it. But reflect that the destiny of man is interwoven with a thousand different incidents which shake the constancy of the heart : yet, if it be true that I could neither find nor impart happiness ; if it be true that I lead a solitary life since I quitted you ; that I never speak my real sentiments ; that the mother of my child, she who has so many claims upon my

love, is a stranger alike to my secrets and my thoughts ; if it be true that an habitual melancholy has occasioned the return of that disease, from which your kind attentions, Corinna, formerly relieved me ; if I am come to Italy, not to seek a cure (you know that I am not fond of life) but to bid you adieu in case I should die,—would you refuse me the indulgence of seeing you once; only once more ? I wish for it, because I think the interview may be of benefit to you. 'Tis not my own sufferings that make me so urgent. What matters it that I am wretched ! What signifies it if a horrible weight eternally oppresses my soul, if I am obliged to leave this place without seeing you, without having obtained your pardon. I ought to be miserable, and so I certainly shall be. But I should hope your heart would be relieved, if you could think of me as your friend, if you should have seen how dear you are to me, if you should have been made sensible of it by these looks, by this

accent of Oswald, of that criminal whose situation is more changed than his heart.

“ I respect my present connections ; I love your sister ; but the human heart, singular and inconsistent, is capable of harbouring that affection, and also the tenderness which I feel for you. I have nothing to say concerning myself, that can be committed to writing ; all that which requires explanation condemns me. Nevertheless, if you were to see me prostrate at your feet, you would discover, amid all my faults and all my duties, how dear you still are to my heart, and this interview would leave a soothing sentiment behind. Alas ! our state of health is very precarious, and in my opinion Heaven has not decreed us length of life. May either of us who shall go before the other be assured of the regret and the love of the friend who shall be left behind in this world ! The innocent alone ought to be blest with this enjoyment, but may it also be granted to the guilty.

“ Corinna, exalted friend, you who can read the heart; divine that which I am incapable of writing; listen to me as you once listened. Permit me to see you; permit my pallid lips to press your enfeebled hands. Ah! it is not I alone who have reduced you to this state; 'tis the same sentiment that has consumed us both; 'tis the shaft of fate that has struck two beings who mutually loved: but it has devoted one of them to guilt, and he, Corinna, is not perhaps the least to be pitied!”

Corinna's Answer.

“ If nothing more were necessary for your pardon than to see you, I should not for a moment have refused to grant your request. I know not why I feel no resentment against you, though the misery you have occasioned makes me shudder with horror. It must be because I still love you that I feel no emotion of

hatred ; religion alone would not be sufficient thus to disarm me. I have known moments in which my reason was impaired ; others, and they were the most agreeable, when I thought I should die before the close of day, of the oppression at my heart ; others again in which I doubted of every thing, even of the existence of virtue. You were to me its image here below, and I ceased to have a guide for my thoughts or for my sentiments, when I lost, by the same fatal stroke, both admiration and love.

“ What would have become of me without the assistance of Heaven ? There was nothing in this world but what was embittered by the recollection of you. In the recesses of my soul God reserved for me one single asylum. My bodily strength is continually decreasing, but this is not the case with regard to the enthusiasm which supports me. I take pleasure in thinking that to render our-

selves worthy of immortality is the only genuine end of existence. Happiness and misery alike conduct to this end, and you have been chosen to root up my life from the earth, to which I was attached by too strong a tie.

“ When I was informed of your arrival in Italy, when I again beheld your handwriting, when I knew that we were parted only by the river, a dreadful perturbation agitated my soul. In order to restrain what I felt, I was obliged to bear continually in mind that my sister was your wife. I will not conceal from you, that the idea of seeing you again filled my bosom with a happiness, an inexpressible emotion which my heart, intoxicated anew, preferred to ages of tranquillity; but Providence did not forsake me in this danger. Are you not the husband of another? What then could I have to say to you? Were I even permitted to expire in your arms, what comfort would be left

for my conscience, if I were to make no sacrifice, if I still wished for another day, another hour? Now that I have renounced the gratification of seeing you, I shall perhaps appear before God with the greater confidence. This great resolution will appease my soul. Felicity such as I enjoyed when you loved me is not in unison with our nature : it agitates, it disturbs ; and then, how transitory ! But a life of habitual prayer, of religious reverie, which tends to improve the heart, and to enable us to subject our passions to our duty, is a blissful state ; and I know not what a derangement the mere sound of your voice might produce in this life of repose which I think I have obtained. You have distressed me greatly by informing me that your health is impaired. Alas ! I can no longer attend you ; but still I suffer with you. May the Almighty prolong your life, my lord ; be happy, but let your happiness be the result of piety ! A secret correspondence with the

Deity seems to place within us the being who communicates its griefs and the voice which returns a reply ; it makes two friends of one single soul. Would you still seek what is called happiness ? Ah ! will you ever find affection superior to mine ? Do you know that in the deserts of the new world, I would have blessed my lot, had you permitted me to follow you thither ? Do you know that I would have waited on you like a slave ? Do you know that I would have prostrated myself before you as before a messenger from Heaven, had you loved me with fidelity ? And how have you treated so much love ? How have you treated an affection unparalleled in this world ? You have converted it into a wretchedness unparalleled as itself. Aspire not then to happiness ; offend me not by hoping to obtain it. Pray like me, pray, and may our souls meet in Heaven !

“ When I shall, however, feel myself very near my end, perhaps I shall place myself

In some situation where I may see you pass by. And why should I not? Assuredly, when my eyes shall fail, when they shall be incapable of performing their functions, your image will be present with me. And if I had recently seen you, would not the illusion be more distinct? the deities of old were never present at death; I will keep you away from mine: but still I wish that a sight of you once more may impress your features upon my fainting soul. Oswald, Oswald, what have I said? You see what I am when I indulge the recollection of you.

“Why has not Lucilia been to see me? She is your wife, but she is likewise my sister. I have something affectionate, nay even generous to say to her. And why has not your daughter been brought to me? I must not see you, but those around you are my family. Am I renounced by them? Are you afraid that poor little Julietta will be too much affected by the

sight of me ; it is true that I have only the appearance of a shadow, but I have still a smile left for your child. Adieu, my lord, adieu ; I can call you brother, but it is because you are the husband of my sister. Ah ! you will at least wear mourning when I die ; you will be present as a relative at my funeral. To Rome my ashes will first be conveyed ; let my coffin be carried along the same road which my triumphal car once traversed, and do you repose on the very spot where you delivered to me my crown. No, Oswald, no, I do you injustice. I wish not to distress you ; but only to make you drop a tear, and raise your eyes towards that Heaven where I shall expect you."

CHAPTER IV.

SEVERAL days elapsed, and Oswald could not appease the painful agitation of his mind, occasioned by Corinna's letter. He shunned the presence of Lucilia; he spent whole hours on the banks of the river which passed by Corinna's house, and was often tempted to throw himself into its waves, that he might at least be carried, when no more, towards that habitation to which, while living, he was refused access. Corinna's letter informed him that she was desirous of seeing her sister; and though he was surprised at this desire, he would fain have gratified it; but how was he to break the subject to Lucilia? He plainly perceived that she was affected by his melancholy; he hoped

she would inquire the cause, but he could not resolve to speak first; and Lucilia always found means to turn the conversation to indifferent subjects, to propose a walk, in a word to avoid every thing that might have led to an explanation. She sometimes expressed a wish to leave Florence, and to visit Rome and Naples. Lord Nelvil never thwarted this inclination; but only requested her to defer her departure for a few days, and Lucilia agreed, with a countenance expressive of coldness and dignity.

Oswald resolved that Corinna should at least see his daughter, and he privately ordered her governess to take the child to her aunt's. He went to meet her as she returned, and inquired how she liked her visit. Julietta answered in Italian, and her pronunciation, which resembled Corinna's, made Oswald shudder. "Who taught you that, my dear?" said he.— "The lady I have been to see," answered

Julietta. "And how did she receive you?" — "She cried very much when she saw me," said Julietta, "but I don't know why. She looked very ill; she kissed me and cried, and that only made her worse." — "And do you like the lady, my love?" continued Lord Nelvil. "I love her dearly," replied Julietta; "I will go to her every day. She promised to teach me all she knows. She says she wants me to resemble Corinna. Who is that Corinna, papa? The Lady would not tell me that." Lord Nelvil made no answer, but retired to conceal his emotion. He directed that every day when Julietta was abroad she should be taken to Corinna's; and perhaps he was somewhat to blame for thus disposing of the child without the consent of Lucilia. But in a few days Julietta made an inconceivably rapid progress in all her studies. Her Italian master was delighted with her pronunciation; and her music masters could not sufficiently admire her first attempts.

Nothing that had yet occurred had given such pain to Lucilia, as this influence over the education of her daughter, acquired by Corinna. She was informed by Julietta that poor Corinna, in her feeble and declining state, took the utmost pains to instruct her, and to communicate to her all her talents, as a legacy which she took delight in bequeathing her during her life. This conduct would have excited tender emotions in the bosom of Lucilia, had she not ascribed it to a plan to separate Lord Nelvil from her; but she was divided between the very natural desire of directing herself the education of her daughter, and the idea that she should deprive her of lessons from which she received such astonishing improvement. One day Lord Nelvil entered the room, when Julietta was taking her lesson in music. She held a harp in the form of a lyre, proportioned to her size, in the same manner as Corinna, and her little arms and charming face afforded a perfect re-

semblance of her aunt. She might have been said to be the miniature of a beautiful picture, with the additional grace of infancy, which diffuses over every thing an innocent charm. At this sight Oswald was so powerfully agitated that he could not utter a word, and sunk trembling into a chair. Julietta then performed on her harp a Scotch tune, which Corinna had played for Lord Nelvil at Tivoli, before a picture of Ossian. While Oswald, scarcely breathing, listened to the tones, Lucilia advanced behind him without his seeing her. When Julietta had finished, her father took her upon his knee, and said: "And so the lady who lives on the banks of the Arno has taught you to play that tune?"—"Yes," answered Julietta, "but not without the greatest difficulty. She was taken ill very often while she was instructing me. I requested her several times to desist, but she would not; and she made me promise to repeat this tune before you on

a certain day, the seventeenth of November I believe," "Ah! my God!" exclaimed Lord Nelvil, and embraced his daughter with abundance of tears.

Lucilia then appeared, and taking Julietta by the hand, said to her husband in English: " 'Tis going too far, my lord, to endeavour to deprive me of the affection of my daughter too; my wretchedness claims at least that consolation."— So saying, she conducted Julietta out of the room. Lord Nelvil attempted in vain to follow her, she would not suffer him; and it was not till the hour of dinner that he was informed she had gone out several hours before, alone and without saying whither she was going. He was extremely uneasy at her absence, when he saw her return with an expression of kindness and composure in her countenance, very different from what he had expected. He resolved at length to speak to her with confidence, and endeavour to obtain

her pardon by sincerity, but she said to him: "Let this explanation, my lord, so necessary for both, be a little longer deferred. You shall soon know the reasons for this request."

During dinner she took a much more lively interest than usual in the conversation. Several days passed, in which Lucilia constantly appeared more amiable and more animated than she had ever done before. Lord Nelvil was unable to account for the change. The cause of it was this: Lucilia had been extremely chagrined at her daughter's visit to Corinna, and the delight which Lord Nelvil seemed to take in the progress which the child made in consequence of the lessons she received from Corinna. What she had so long concealed within her bosom, had at that moment escaped, and as it happens with persons who are put out of their natural temper, she all at once took a very spirited resolution to set off for Co-

rinna's, for the purpose of asking her if she was determined to continue her efforts to seduce from her the affections of her husband. Lucilia forcibly reasoned with herself till the moment she reached Corinna's house ; such a timidity then overpowered her, that she could not have mustered sufficient resolution to enter, had not Corinna, who perceived her from the windows, sent Theresina to ask her to walk in. Lucilia went up stairs to Corinna's apartment, and no sooner did she see her than all her irritation against her ceased : on the contrary, she was deeply affected by the deplorable state of her sister's health, and embraced her with tears.

The two sisters then began a conversation replete with frankness and candour on both sides. Of this frankness Corinna set the first example, which Lucilia could not do otherwise than follow. Corinna gained the same ascendancy over her sister, as she possessed over every body else.

In her company it was impossible to retain dissimulation or reserve. Corinna did not conceal from Lucilia that she thought she had not long to live, and this, her paleness and weakness but too clearly demonstrated. She spoke with openness to Lucilia on the most delicate subjects; she was anxious to promote her happiness and that of Oswald. She knew from what Prince Castel-Forte had told her, and still better from what she had herself divined, that coldness and reserve frequently existed between them; and employing that ascendancy which was given her by her understanding, and the approaching end with which she was threatened, she generously endeavoured to place Lucilia on a better footing with Lord Nelvil. Being thoroughly acquainted with his character, she explained to Lucilia the reason why it was necessary that he should find in the woman he loved, a disposition in some respects different from his own; a spontaneous confidence,

because his natural reserve prevented him from soliciting it; more animation, because he was apt to be dejected; and vivacity to counteract the effect of his own melancholy. Corinna depicted herself in the happy period of her life; she gave her opinion upon herself as though it had been upon a stranger, and warmly represented to Lucilia how agreeable that woman could not fail to be, who, with the utmost regularity of conduct, and the most rigid morality, should at the same time possess all the charms, all the gaiety, all the desire to please, which in some females result from the necessity of making amends for failings.

“There are instances,” said Corinna to Lucilia, “of women who have not only been loved in spite of their faults, but for the sake of those very faults. The reason of this absurdity is perhaps because these women endeavoured to appear more amiable that their faults might be over-

looked, and imposed no restraints because they had themselves occasion for indulgence. Be not then proud, Lucilia, of your perfections; let your charm consist in forgetting, in not availing yourself of them. You must supply at one and the same time, both your own place and mine; never imagine that your virtues authorize the least negligence of exterior attractions, and that those virtues give you a right to behave with pride and reserve. If this pride were not just, it would perhaps be less offensive; for the exercise of your rights estranges the heart more than unjust pretensions: true delicacy ever delights in conferring favours where none are due."

Lucilia affectionately expressed her high sense of her sister's kindness, to which Corinna replied: "If it were my destiny to live, I should be incapable of such generosity, but since my speedy dissolution is inevitable, it is my earnest

desire that you and your daughter may be a surviving memorial to Oswald of my influence, and that he may never enjoy the exquisite pleasure of sentimental love without recollecting Corinna." Lucilia was constant in her attendance upon her sister every day, and strove by an amiable modesty, and by a still more amiable delicacy of sentiment, to approximate herself to that exalted model, which Oswald had always most passionately adored.

Lord Nelvil was more and more astonished every day, by remarking in the person of Lucilia fresh and nameless graces. He had a shrewd guess that she had seen Corinna, but he could not prevail upon her to make a candid confession. In her first interview with Lucilia, Corinna had enjoined secrecy with respect to their correspondence. She was desirous for once to behold Oswald and Lucilia together, but it seems that she had purposely deferred this interview until she was con-

vinced that she had only a few moments to live. Then she proposed freely to communicate her sentiments and feelings, but kept her plan such a profound secret, that Lucilia herself was unacquainted with the manner in which she intended to carry it into execution.

CHAPTER V.

CORINNA, being persuaded that her distemper was mortal, was desirous to take such a memorable leave of Italy and of Lord Nelvil, as would revive a recollection of that period when her genius was in its meridian splendor. It was a very excusable frailty. The passions of love and glory had ever been blended together in her mind, and until that moment when her heart had entirely dissolved all terrestrial bonds, she ardently longed for an opportunity to convince the man who had forsaken her, that he had brought to an untimely end, an accomplished lady, who excelled all her contemporaries in the ardour of her love and the delicacy of her sentiments. Corinna had no longer her former talent of extemporaneous com-

position, but she wrote a poetical rhapsody, and appointed a day for convoking all those who were desirous to attend in one of the halls of the Academy at Florence; she imparted her scheme to Lucia, and requested her to conduct her husband there. "I may be allowed to ask this favour," said she, "in my present condition." Oswald was panic-struck, when he understood the resolution of Corinna. He began to commune with himself after this manner: "Will she read her own verses? What may be the burthen and argument of her song?" The very chance and prospect of beholding her was sufficient to stagger the resolution of Oswald. On the morning of that ominous day, winter, which is seldom felt in Italy, began to disclose its rigour as in the northern climes. A dreadful wind began to howl throughout the houses. The rain beat violently against the window sashes, and thunder (a phenomenon more frequently seen in Italy than elsewhere) was

heard in the middle of January, and aggravated the unpleasant spectacle of bad weather, by a sentiment of terror. Oswald did not utter a syllable, but all these external appearances evidently augmented the inward dismay of his soul.

He entered the hall, accompanied by Lucilia. An immense crowd of spectators was already assembled. A chair of state had been fitted up in a very dark corner, and Lord Nelvil heard the by-standers say that Corinna was to be seated there, because she was so much indisposed that she could not recite her own verses. Her features were so much disfigured, that she was unwilling to expose them, and had adopted this scheme of beholding Oswald without being seen herself. As soon as she understood that he was come, she advanced towards the chair of state, shrouded in a veil. They were obliged to assist her in walking. She had a faltering step. She halted occasionally in order to take

breath, and it might be said that this short-excursion was a fatiguing journey to her. Thus the last steps of our lives are always tardy and laborious. She was seated, and cast her eyes wistfully around in order to distinguish Oswald ; she descried him, and with an involuntary movement she arose, and extended her arms towards him, but presently relapsed into her sitting attitude, turning aside her countenance, like Dido during her interview with Æneas, in a world where human passions ought to be hushed. The prince of Castel-Forte forcibly withheld Lord Nelvil, who was quite beside himself, and struggled to rush onwards and prostrate himself at her feet. He did so on account of the reverence he owed to Corinna in the presence of such an august assembly.

A young damsel, arrayed in white robes, with a wreath of flowers upon her head, mounted a sort of amphitheatre which had been prepared for the spectacle. She

was the person who was to chaunt the rhapsody of Corinna. There was a remarkable contrast betwixt this mild and serene countenance, a countenance not furrowed by any human griefs, and those words which she was about to rehearse. But this very contrast was congenial to the mind of Corinna. It diffused serenity over those gloomy ideas with which her soul was oppressed. Solemn and harmonious strains of music prepared the audience for those impressions they were about to receive. The unhappy Oswald kept his eyes rivetted upon Corinna, upon the ghostly semblance of that beauteous form which appeared to him like a cruel apparition in a night of mental delirium; and, whilst his heart was bursting, he listened to those lays, inspired by love and misfortune, which the woman whom he had so much injured dedicated to him.

The farewell Rhapsody of Corinna.

“Accept my last solemn farewell; O my

fellow-citizens ! The shades of night begin to hover over my countenance, but the heavens are more beautiful amidst the shades of night. They are bespangled with myriads of stars. It is a rich dessert, served up after the banquet of the day. Thus obscurity suggests numberless ideas which the broad glare of prosperity buries in oblivion. But that organ which could communicate instruction is become languid, yet my soul concentrates its last fires, and makes one expiring effort. In the early dawn of youth I made a vow to reverence the Roman name, which makes my heart still palpitate. You have heaped glory upon me, O my enlightened fellow-citizens ! who never bar the threshold of fame against my sex, nor make a wanton sacrifice of immortal talents at the shrine of jealousy, who applaud the daring flights of genius : that conqueror whose triumph is not graced with a host of captives, or with impious spoils, but who enriches time from the inexhaustible storehouse of eternity.

“ How greatly were my feelings exalted heretofore by a survey of nature and human life ! I conceived that every calamity was derived from a want of reflexion and sensibility, that we might anticipate upon earth celestial joys, which are nothing but endless flights of enthusiasm, uninterrupted transports of love.

“ I am not now come to retract these exalted and generous sentiments ; they are not the cause of those tears that moisten the dust which will soon be scattered over my limbs. I should have accomplished the glorious end of my existence, I should have been a meet partaker of celestial joys, had I attuned the chords of my lyre to the praises of divine benevolence manifested in the creation.

“ Thou dost not disdain, O my Maker, the homage of mortal talents ! The incense of poesy is religious, and the pinions of fancy soar aloft to thee !

“In religion there is nothing servile, nothing vulgar or circumscribed ; its capacity is infinite, immeasurable and immortal ; genius cannot pursue a different track ; when our fancy takes its first excursive flight, it overleaps the boundaries of mortality, and the sublime of every description is an emanation of the divinity. Would to God, that I had placed my affections upon this fair daughter of the skies ! that I had exalted my head above the heavens, in order to shelter it from the storms of human passions : these celestial visions would then not have been supplanted by the vagaries of a distempered imagination. Unhappy wretch that I am ! whatever of genius remains, only serves to give a keener edge to my sorrow. It is in alliance with my inveterate foe. Farewell my country, thou land of my nativity, farewell ! Farewell ye golden dreams of infancy—what have ye to do with death ? You, who have found the sentiments of your own soul recorded in

my writings, O my friends ! wheresoever you are, farewell ! Corinna has not suffered in a bad cause : she has not lost all claims upon your compassion.

“ Fair fields of Italy ! in vain do ye proffer your delights. Ye have nothing to soothe a soul petrified with grief. Would ye harrow up my sorrows afresh, by recalling my wishes ? Would ye conjure up again the image of happiness, in order to make me curse my destiny ? With pious resignation I submit to my fate. O ye mortals who survive me ! when spring returns, recollect with what rapture I adored its beauty, how often I exolled its zephyrs and perfumes ! Recollect my verses. The image of my soul is engraven therein ; but those fatal sisters, love and misfortune, inspire my dying lays. When the ways of Providence are accomplished with us, a secret harmony diffuses serenity over our minds, and prepares us for the arrival of the angel of death. He has nothing to

terrify or appal us. He flies on wings of light, although enveloped with darkness; but before his arrival a thousand dire omens proclaim his approach.

“ When the wind howls, we hear his voice. When the shades of night prevail, they appear like the foldings of his garment. At noon, when the vigorous sons of health only behold a serene sky and a radiant sun, he whom the angel of death claims as his prey, espies a cloud in the azure sky, which threatens to overspread the whole face of nature.

“ Youthful hopes, tender sympathies! ye are all fled. Avaunt, ye unavailing sorrows; if I can still extort any tears, if I can still flatter myself with being beloved, it is because I am going to quit this terrestrial mansion; were I to return to life, then all the sharp arrows of affliction would again be levelled at me.

“ And thou Rome, where my ashes wil

be deposited, who hast witnessed so many illustrious deaths, suffer me to associate with thy immortal shades, but allow me to vent my griefs ! All my other faculties are long since extinct, but I am still alive to sorrow and suffering. It matters not ; let us be resigned. Whatever the dæmon of mortality may be, he grants us repose. A benevolent Providence, the silent tombs, assure me of this fact. I had placed my affections upon earth, and my heart finds no asylum. The angel of death calls me : my condition *will now be more tolerable.*'

Thus ended the last rhapsody of Corinna. The saloon resounded with a hollow and melancholy murmur of approbation. Lord Nelvil, unable any longer to support the violent conflict of his soul, swooned away. Corinna beholding him in this plight, was fain to run to his succour, but her strength failed in the very act of rising : she was conducted to her own dwelling ; and from that moment all hopes

of her recovery vanished away. She sent for a respectable priest, in whom she placed a special confidence, and conversed with him a long time. Lucilia repaired to her habitation: the grief of Oswald had so deeply affected her, that she fell at her sister's feet in order to beseech her to grant him an interview. Corinna denied her suit without discovering any resentment. "I forgive him," said she, "although he has planted a dagger in my heart; men are strangers to the mischief which they do, and their companions persuade them that it is a mere jest to make a female unhappy, and then reduce her to despair. But now on the eve of death, by the grace of God, I have recovered my tranquillity, and am sensible that the sight of Oswald would only recall sentiments to my mind ill-suited to my present condition. Religion alone can conduct me safe through this terrible journey. I forgive the man whom I have loved so much," added she in a feeble tone of voice, "since

he lives happy with you. But when the period of his death approaches, let him remember Corinna. If it be God's will, she will be his guardian angel; for the passion of love must be everlasting, if it be powerful enough to deprive us of our existence." Oswald, petrified with grief, stood on the threshold, threatening to rush in in spite of the positive injunctions of Corinna. Lucilia, like an angel of peace, acted the part of a mediatrix betwixt despair and agony.

One evening when Corinna appeared better than usual, Lucilia persuaded Oswald to accompany her for a few minutes on a visit to their daughter, whom they had not seen for three days. Corinna in the mean time suffered a relapse, and performed all the rites of her religion. It is affirmed that she said to the venerable sage before whom she deposed her last oral confession: "Father, you know my unhappy fate; pronounce sentence upon me.

I never avenged any wrong that was done me; was never insensible to the misfortunes of others; my faults proceeded from those passions which are not blameable in themselves, had they not been blended with error by pride and human imbecility. Do you, father, who have more experience than myself, believe that God will pardon my sins?" "Yes, daughter," said the old man, "I hope so; is your heart entirely devoted to him?" "I believe so," replied Corinna, "pray take this portrait away (it was Oswald's picture) and impress upon my heart the image of him who descended upon earth, not for the sake of the wise and the mighty, but to relieve the sick and the afflicted." Corinna then perceived the Prince of Castel-Forte weeping at her bed-side. "Friend," said she, extending her hand towards him, "you are the only person near me at this moment. My life has been devoted to my love, and I should die solitary if you did not bear me company." Here her

tears began to flow apace. "However," added she, "at such times we can do without assistance; our friends can only follow us as far as the threshold of life."

She then desired to be carried to the window on an easy chair, in order to behold once more the light of heaven. Lucilia returned, and the unhappy Oswald, unable to contain himself any longer, followed her and dropt upon his knee before Corinna. She strove to speak but her utterance failed her. She raised her eyes towards heaven, and saw the moon covered with the same dusky cloud which she had formerly pointed out to Oswald on the sea shore on their journey to Naples. She pointed to it with her dying hand, breathed her last sigh, and that hand fell lifeless by her side.

But what became of Oswald? He was so much distracted that the loss both of reason and life was apprehended. At

Rome he attended the funeral procession of Corinna. He retired for some time to Tivoli, without permitting his wife and daughter to accompany him. At length duty and affection restored him to their arms. They all set out for England together. Lord Nelvil became the most excellent and sublime pattern of domestic virtue. But whether he can exculpate his former conduct? whether those who approved it will be able to administer comfort to him? these questions I cannot resolve, and on that account can neither blame nor acquit him.

FINIS.

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NOTES.

Page 22, line 9.

(4) An ancient tradition supports the prejudice which persuaded Corinna that the diamond gives information of treachery. This tradition is repeated in some Spanish verses, the character of which is truly singular. The Portuguese prince Fernand addresses them, in a tragedy by Calderon, to the king of Fez, by whom he has been made prisoner. This prince chose rather to die in chains than to deliver to a Moorish king a christian town, offered by his brother, king Edward, as the price of his ransom. The Moorish monarch, irritated by this refusal, treated the noble prince with the greatest indignity. The latter, in order to move him to relent, reminds him that mercy and generosity are the genuine characteristics of supreme power. He mentions every thing loyal in the universe; the lion, the dolphin, and the eagle, among animals: he even seeks among the plants and stones, the traits of native kindness ascribed to such as are supposed to rule the rest: and it is on this occasion he says, that the diamond which can resist iron, breaks of itself and is reduced to powder, to apprise the owner of the treachery with which he is threatened.

It is impossible to say whether this manner of considering all nature as corresponding with the sentiments and destiny of man be mathematically true ; so much is certain, that it is pleasing to the imagination, and that poetry in general, and the Spanish poets in particular, derive great beauties from it.

I am only acquainted with Calderon by means of the German translation of Augustus William Schlegel. But it is well known to the public in Germany, that this writer, one of the first poets of his country, has found means to transplant with extraordinary felicity into his language, the poetic beauties of the Spaniards, the English, the Italians, and the Portuguese. From translations executed with such ability a competent idea of any original whatever may be obtained.

Page 35, line 19.

(5) M. Dubreuil, a very skilful French physician, had an intimate friend, M. de Pemeja, a man equally distinguished. M. Dubreuil was attacked with a mortal and contagious disease, and was so beloved that his chamber was thronged with visitors. M. Dubreuil called M. de Pemeja and said to him : " You must dismiss all these people ; you know my friend that my disorder is contagious, and that there ought to be nobody here but yourself." What an expression ! Happy are those who hear it ! M. de Pemeja survived his friend only a fortnight.

Page 97, line 3.

(7) Among the Italian comic writers must be reckoned the Chevalier Rossi, a Roman, whose works are distinguished for profound observation and keenness of satire.

Page 197, line 21.

(8) Talma having passed several years of his life in London, has happily combined in his admirable genius the character and beauties of the theatrical art of both countries.

Page 274, line 18.

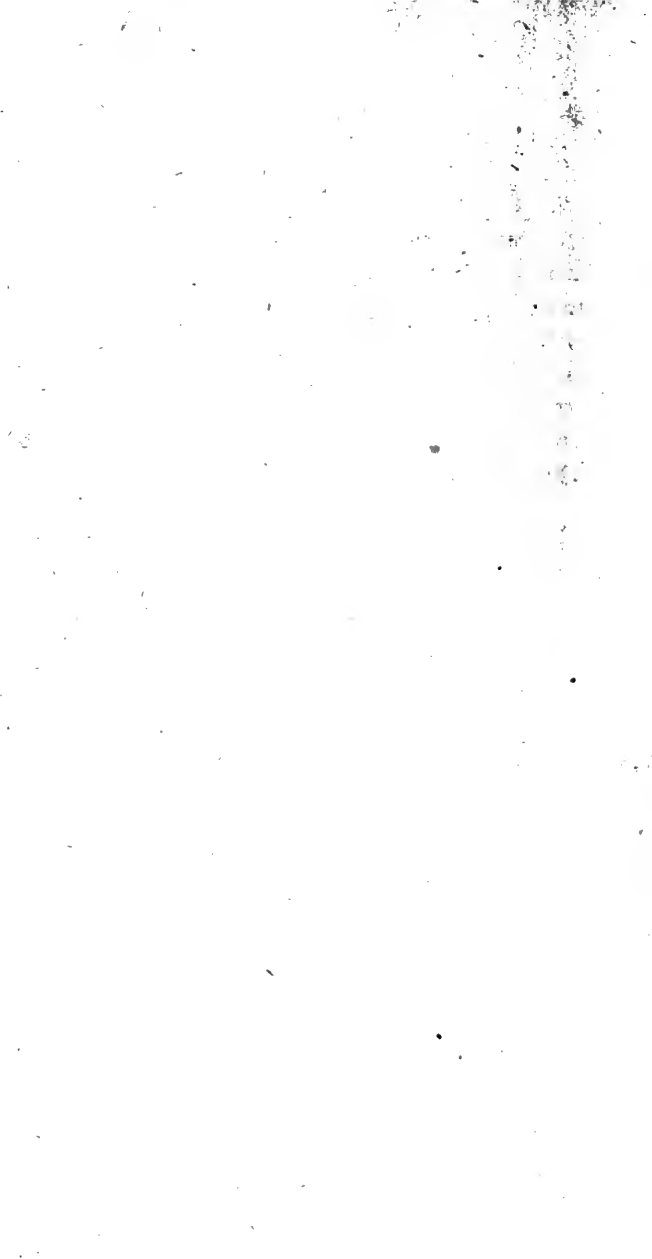
(9) After Dante's death the Florentines, ashamed of having suffered him to perish far from his native soil, sent a deputation to the Pope to beg of him the remains of the poet interred at Ravenna. The pontiff refused to comply with their request, justly thinking that the country which had afforded an asylum to the exile, was become his country; and unwilling to yield the glory attached to the possession of his tomb.

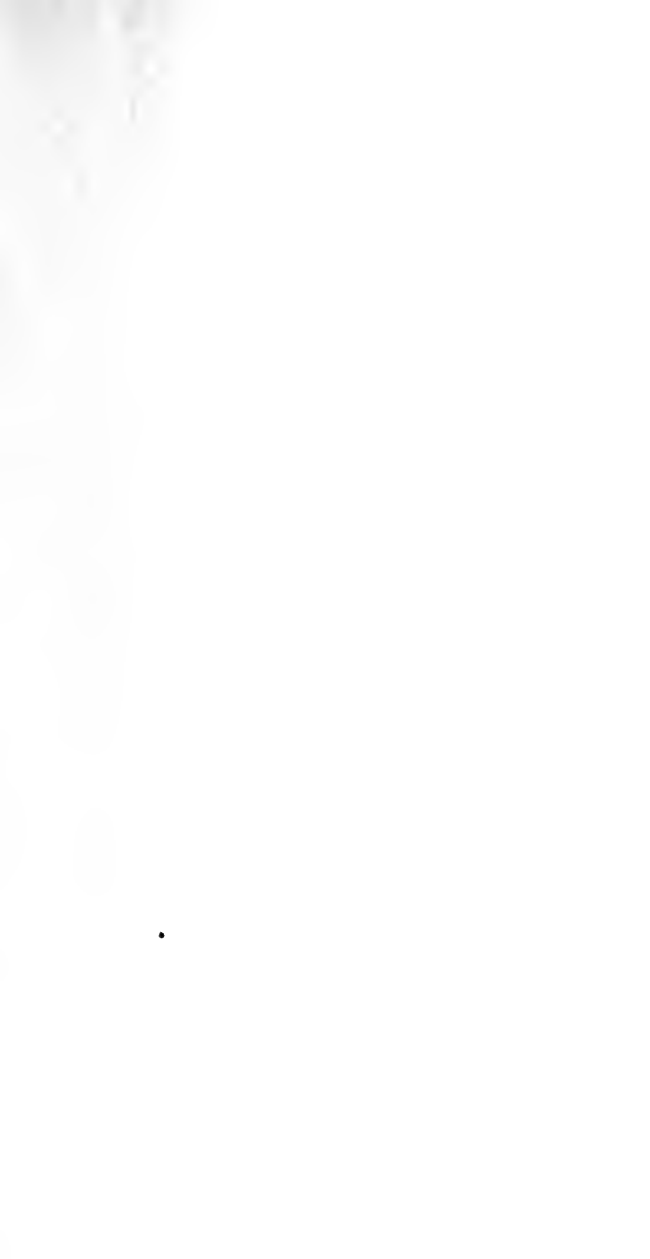
Page 274, line last.

(10) Alfieri says that it was while walking in the church of Santa Croce, he first felt the love of glory; and in the same edifice he is entombed. The epitaph which he himself composed for his worthy friend the Countess of Albany and himself, is the most affecting and simple affection of long and perfect friendship.

Page 377, line 16.

(11) It had been announced at Bologna that an eclipse of the sun would take place at two o'clock in the afternoon. The people assembled in the public square to see it, and impatient at its not commencing so soon as they wished, they loudly called for it as they would for an actor who absents himself. At length it began, and as the clouds prevented them from observing it distinctly, they began to hiss with all their might, because the spectacle had fallen short of their expectations.









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